

Achieve Faster, More Effective, and
Longer-lasting Impact by Mastering the
5 Principles of Leading with Belief[®]

The Art *of* Leading with Belief

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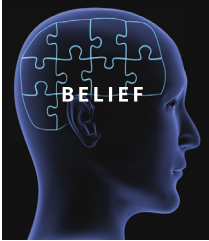
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INTRODUCTION: Thinking Differently About Leading

SUCCESSFUL LEADERS LEAD WITH BELIEF

Successful leaders have always been leading with belief. Somewhat unknowingly, they have accomplished leadership initiatives more quickly, embedded them more deeply, and better designed them to last by working with beliefs. This book shows how we can learn from successful leaders, and from science, to use the Art of Leading with Belief to achieve maximum leadership impact and long-term leadership success.



The insight that successful leaders lead with belief emerged from my training and experience in the fields of psychology and business. My training as a psychologist, as well as my experience as an executive coach, convinced me early in my career that, in order to help leaders build on the skills that made them effective, I would need to understand what they believe about themselves, about others, and about leading.

Extensive research in several fields had shown that the more we understand about how perceptions, thoughts, and beliefs influence behaviour, the more effective we can be at managing our own behaviour and influencing the actions and decisions of others. That research had shown us that if we want to quickly and effectively change the way someone feels or how they act, we must change what they believe (Albert Ellis, 1955). In other words:

The more we understand about how beliefs influence behaviour, the more effective we can be as professionals and as leaders.

It became clear to me through my work as an executive assessment and development specialist that successful leaders have always intuitively known this. This insight emerged in 1999 shortly after I began working with the leadership team at The Oppenheimer Group. I noticed that

John Anderson, President and CEO at the time, was actively working with beliefs in his efforts to build a new culture and a new future for The Oppenheimer Group. He was actively seeking to guide his people to believe in a different way of doing business in a rapidly changing industry.

This was when the full breadth, impact, and power of mastering the Art of Leading with Belief became clear to me. Successful leaders lead by reinforcing positive behaviours and promoting new and more effective behaviours as needed to meet business objectives, and they seek to influence the emotions of others in order to successfully do so. The link became obvious: If you want to lead in the most powerful and effective way possible, learn from over one hundred years of science and from our most successful leaders. That is, learn the Art of Leading with Belief.

As I explored this idea, I noticed that all of the highly successful leaders I was working with were, for the most part, seeking to align the beliefs of employees in their efforts to implement their visions, create organizational cultures, bring about change, and achieve business results. What became clear to me was that these executives naturally understood the link between the beliefs of individuals and groups, their behaviour, and business results. And they intuitively leveraged this powerful link to drive higher levels of organizational performance.

Two questions emerged from these insights: First, “How might we better understand leadership by considering leadership effectiveness from the perspective of beliefs?” and second, “How might we increase leadership effectiveness by offering methods that enhance a leader’s ability to work with beliefs?”

As I began to discuss these questions with the successful leaders I was working with, they and I began to see how they had been somewhat unconsciously working with beliefs in all of their leadership initiatives. They recalled experiences where they had set out to change beliefs without articulating this clearly to themselves or others. Their vocabulary

began to include the word “belief” and the idea became more “top of mind” for them, just as it had for me. So I set out to discover how these leaders had worked with beliefs to successfully lead through some of the most challenging times in the history of their organizations.

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF LEADING WITH BELIEF

PRINCIPLE 1	BELIEFS DRIVE EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP
PRINCIPLE 2	SUCCESSFUL LEADERS BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES
PRINCIPLE 3	SUCCESSFUL LEADERS INSPIRE BELIEF
PRINCIPLE 4	LEADERSHIP CREDIBILITY IS BUILT ON BELIEF
PRINCIPLE 5	LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IS ENABLED BY BELIEF

I began to delve deeper into the experiences of the leaders I was working with and to research how other leaders responded to the idea of working with beliefs. I reviewed the literature on beliefs, emotions, and behaviour from a range of fields, and particularly that of psychology. I studied what highly accomplished and published leaders have said about their beliefs.

I then conducted in-depth interviews with five of the most successful leaders I was working with. These leaders oversaw widely differing organizations within quite different business areas. They were: John Anderson, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, The Oppenheimer Group (o-1); Keith Farlinger, Chief Executive Officer, BDO Canada LLP (o-2); Laura Nashman, Chief Executive Officer, British Columbia Pension Corporation (o-3); Herb Singer, Founder and President, Discount Car & Truck Rentals (o-4); and David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Peel. (o-5)

This research provided the insights that led to The Theory of Belief-based Leadership® and to the creation of the Five Principles of Leading with Belief.©

THE FIVE ACTION INITIATIVES FOR LEADING WITH BELIEF

Action Initiative 1	TO LEAD BEHAVIOUR, LEAD BELIEF
Action Initiative 2	TO REALIZE SUCCESS, RECOGNIZE POTENTIAL
Action Initiative 3	TO INSPIRE PERFORMANCE, INSPIRE BELIEF
Action Initiative 4	TO BECOME CREDIBLE, BECOME BELIEVABLE
Action Initiative 5	TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT, PROMOTE BELIEF

My research also led to the awareness of how the five principles of leading with belief must be translated into action for significant change and development to take place. That beliefs influence behaviour is a fundamental truth. Yet knowing this is not sufficient to create a more effective person, professional, or leader. My research showed that the five action initiatives set out above, well executed, enable leaders to bring their insights to fruition through real and lasting change.

THE POWER OF BELIEF

Beliefs are underlying forces that move us. They are embedded in our values. They inform and guide our thinking. They influence our perceptions, feelings, and actions. By working at the level of belief, we can gain the ability to understand many things we have not previously been able to understand and influence events in ways we previously thought impossible.

We trust and rely on our beliefs. If we did not, we would have no certainty and no sense of safety. Yet we can change our beliefs. We can refine and make our beliefs increasingly accurate. And we can refine the actions that we take based on our new beliefs. Because of this, we have the opportunity to take more informed and effective actions. And since we can influence the beliefs of others in constructive ways, we can also help others to make better decisions and to become more effective.

THE MISSING LINK IN LEADING

Our beliefs, in large part, determine our actions in new situations, as well as in those that we know well. Yet we tend not to notice the beliefs that we hold, much like we tend not to notice our body language. Many of our beliefs lie outside our awareness. They are part of our “personal operating system”. This is as true in the art of leading as it is in the art of living.

An organization can be understood in much the same way as a living person. That is, it can be seen to have a purpose (mission), aspirations (vision), and values (culture). And when it comes to leading, beliefs are a powerful entry point for instilling a shared sense of culture, rallying people toward a cause, mission, or vision, and facilitating change. Being able to influence beliefs is a powerful and essential component of leadership.

Yet historically in business we have been more concerned about what people do than what they believe or what they feel. But what people believe and what they feel largely determines what they do. This is the power of Leading with Belief. Beliefs are a critical yet often unrecognized missing link in leadership success. When leaders learn how to work with beliefs, they learn how to become more powerful and effective.

THE POWER OF LEADING WITH BELIEF

This book is about the Art of Leading with Belief. It shows how highly successful leaders have used beliefs to have impressive leadership impact, and it sets out how all leaders can work with the five Principles of Leading with Belief to become more successful. The message is this: Whether seeking to promote a new vision, instill a new mission or culture, lead a change in the way business is conducted, enhance employee morale and engagement, learn new leadership skills, or gain the leadership confidence and credibility needed to lead successfully through difficult times,

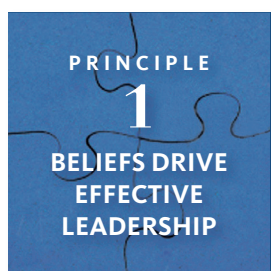
**leadership impact can be made faster, more effective,
and longer-lasting by mastering the Art of Leading with Belief.**

1.0 PRINCIPLE ONE: Beliefs Drive Effective Leadership

“You have to believe it is important to be successful if you are going to be.”

– Herb Singer, Founder and President, Discount Car & Truck Rentals

ACTION INITIATIVE ONE: TO LEAD BEHAVIOUR, LEAD BELIEF



The fundamental premise and most basic principle of Leading with Belief is that Beliefs Drive Effective Leadership.

Beliefs are a powerful influence on perceptions, feelings, and actions. Since beliefs determine whether employees will accept leaders and adopt their initiatives, and since feelings and actions determine how engaged employees are in their work, as well as how effective their work behaviours will be, beliefs offer leaders a powerful tool for becoming more successful.

THE BENEFITS OF LEADING WITH BELIEF

Successful leaders have always led others by managing their own beliefs and by inspiring essential beliefs in others. However, successful leaders can become even more effective by learning how to identify beliefs, understand their impact, and directly influence them. Further, those who aspire to leadership roles can better learn how to become successful in all aspects of leading by learning how to Lead with Belief. The benefits are many.



Greater Clarity

In day-to-day business situations, beliefs impact critical factors such as relationships, productivity, and the effectiveness of our actions. Once beliefs are brought to the surface, leaders begin to gain a clearer understanding of their own behaviour as well as the underlying reasons behind the actions of others. Clarity about what it is that stakeholders believe improves understanding of leadership challenges. It creates a more tangible vision of leading, that is, a vision of leading as the art of inspiring and managing beliefs.

Stronger Employee Engagement

Successful leaders realize that engaged employees are a powerful source of competitive advantage. Supporting this belief, studies have demonstrated that improvements in employee engagement are linked to increases in sales, customer loyalty, retention, and overall business results (Gallup 2009, 2010). Engaged employees are more likely to stay with an organization and more likely to be productive, customer-focused, and profit-generating. Since employee engagement stems from feelings, and feelings are largely based on beliefs, mastering the Art of Leading with Belief enables leaders to more consciously, directly, and efficiently influence how people feel about their organization, their work, and their future. In short, Leading with Belief offers leaders the opportunity to more effectively engage people and encourage them to achieve desired results. Leading with Belief fosters engagement more quickly and more powerfully.

Accelerated Impact

Today, organizations and their leaders are faced with the need to achieve goals faster and often with fewer resources. Increasingly, leaders are recognizing that to deliver critical goals successfully, they need to inspire their employees to go the extra mile. Leveraging the process of Leading with Belief enables leaders to fast-track the impact of their objectives because it enables them to get closer to the heart of the issues, uncover the root causes of barriers, and more quickly inspire the most productive

behaviour in people. In other words, focusing directly on beliefs accelerates leadership impact.

When confronting a change, improving customer centricity, or increasing margins, seeking first to understand the beliefs that exist among stakeholders enables leaders to manage beliefs in ways that influence those behaviours and accelerate achievement of results. Seeking first to understand beliefs enables leaders to more quickly build a track record of effective and timely goal achievement.

Better Decision-Making

Effective decision-making is a key characteristic of highly successful leadership teams. Every day, leaders make decisions that impact untold numbers of people. Decisions lie at the heart of leadership success. Leaders will be held accountable for their decision outcomes and will be judged accordingly by others. Since beliefs, often in the form of assumptions, significantly influence how and what leaders decide, beliefs contribute significantly to the effectiveness of a leader's decisions. It is crucial for leaders to recognize the manner in which their own beliefs contribute to their decisions and how the beliefs of others contribute to theirs. Having this beneficial awareness opens minds to alternatives and supports more effective organizational performance.

Skilled People and Teams

Developing the skills of others by transitioning knowledge, experience, and beliefs is a core component of leading. The strong link between belief and learning is often missed when the mentor or teacher assumes that passing on information will automatically bring about new habits or heightened capacity. To bring about new behaviour and habits, one must bring about new beliefs that will drive that behaviour. Students must believe what they have been taught, as well as the importance of implementing what they have learned, if they are to change their behaviour.

Improved Performance

The essence of leading is the ability to enable and motivate people to successfully achieve required results. Sustainable impact comes from encouraging productive beliefs. An effective leader helps people to connect with and believe in their abilities, enables them to accomplish purposeful objectives, and inspires them to believe in and feel a sense of personal accomplishment and contribution. (1-1)

Leading with Belief offers leaders an active and powerful process for optimizing performance through understanding and working with what people believe about events and what they believe about themselves. The recognition that effectiveness is governed by beliefs enables a leader to become more successful at confronting and addressing the heart of some of the most challenging issues in leadership: challenges such as continuously engaging employees in a changing business context; driving results in volatile business markets, and; addressing the needs of stakeholders within complex multicultural contexts.

Enhanced Credibility

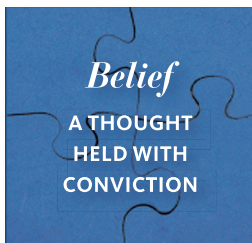
Credibility is a powerful component of leadership. Credibility bolsters achievement of critical business results. If a leader cannot inspire people to believe in a course of action, those people will not wholeheartedly support that action. If people believe that a leader's initiative is a passing fad and not based on credible thinking, they will not readily adopt new behaviours required to support that initiative. If people believe that a leader is incapable of bringing a new plan to fruition, they will resist taking actions to implement it. All of this can lead to failed initiatives and further erosion of trust and credibility, and can cause stakeholders to become even more cautious and resistant to future initiatives. So credibility is crucial to leadership success. Leaders must be believed in if they are to be successful.

BELIEFS, BEHAVIOUR, AND INFLUENCE

The principle that Beliefs Drive Effective Leadership is based on the well-researched and well-documented premise that beliefs influence perceptions, feelings, behaviours, and decisions. It has been shown that beliefs influence what we notice, how we interpret what we notice, how we feel about what we notice, and what we do about what we notice. The more we become aware of and understand how beliefs influence our own behaviour and how they impact the behaviour of others, the more effective we can become at managing ourselves, as well as at influencing the feelings, actions, and decisions of others. In other words, the more we understand how beliefs impact individual and group behaviour, the more knowledge we will have to inspire the most productive behaviours. (1-2)

Within this context, it is important to understand what we mean by the terms belief, behaviour, and influence. Many issues come into play when attempting to define these terms and many theorists disagree on definitions. But we can only understand and accept the ideas presented herein with a common understanding of these concepts.

Beliefs



A belief is most simply understood as a thought that is held with conviction. We will define a thought as a form of mental processing that can be put into words, processed internally, and stated to others. We will use the term conviction to refer to a sentiment or feeling that something is good or that it

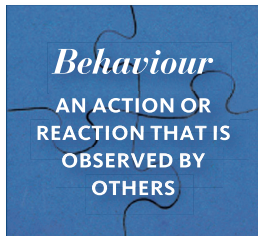
is right. An important aspect of a belief is that it can be held more or less strongly, that is, a belief can be held with differing levels of conviction.

We could dig more deeply into the essence of thought and conviction, but doing so would take us into the realm of biology as it relates to emotion and mental processing. Such matters are of little practical value for our

purposes. Leaders will not attempt to influence biological process, but they will attempt to influence what people believe and their level of conviction about business initiatives.

We will address those beliefs that leaders hold about themselves as leaders. We will also be concerned with their beliefs about the best way to lead, that is, those beliefs that define their leadership approach and philosophy. Further, we will focus on the beliefs that those who follow hold about their leaders, their colleagues, and their work.

Behaviour



The word *behaviour* is used herein to describe *actions or reactions that can be observed by others*, including things they might do or say. Psychologists often include emotional reactions as a form of behaviour (Furnham, 2012). However, we will use the word only to describe actions that are visible to others, such as making a statement of disbelief or taking actions that do not support a change initiative.

For example, while a person might feel liking towards someone, when we are talking about behaviour, we are concerned about matters such as whether they communicate pleasantly to that person, include them in initiatives, and speak positively about them to others.

Influence

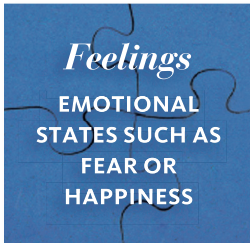


By the term *influence* we will refer to *the capacity to have an effect on something or someone, and in particular on the beliefs, emotions, or behaviour of people within organizations*. The word “influence” is chosen carefully since, when it comes to the impact of beliefs on feelings and behaviours, there are

often factors other than beliefs at play.

FEELINGS AND VALUES

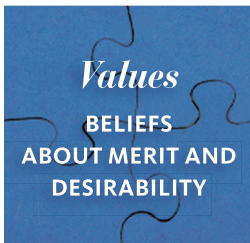
Feelings



We will define *feelings* as *emotional states such as happiness, fear, anger, or sorrow*. There are many examples of feelings in business. A high level of job satisfaction, for example, reflects a good feeling about the work that a person does. Strong team spirit is not just a belief that a group of people work

well together, it is a positive feeling about working collaboratively with others and about being part of something bigger. Employee engagement rests on a fluid balance of feelings such as enthusiasm about one's work and joy in one's achievements. What is important to recognize is that an individual does not *think* that they are engaged, they *feel* engaged. Thoughts are involved in complex ways, but the essence is that of feeling, not thinking.

Values



While we are not directly concerned with values, it is helpful to be clear about the difference between the concepts of thoughts, beliefs, and values. A *thought* is a *mental representation held without conviction*. A *belief* is a *thought held with some level of conviction* as to its truth or "correctness." A *value*

is a *belief that an object, process, or outcome is desirable or undesirable*.

By way of example, a thought is "I *think* that I *might* be able to become a good leader." A corresponding belief is "I *know* I can become a good leader." A related value is "I *want* to become a good leader." You can have thoughts without conviction and you can have beliefs without valuing what they are about.

THE INFLUENCE OF BELIEFS

“What makes people human is their capacity to develop a set of beliefs that drive behaviour.”

– David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Peel

The greatest human achievements have been made because of what the visionaries and leaders among us have believed to be possible. At the same time, the most significant atrocities committed by the human race have been a function of what one or more groups of people have believed about other groups of people, and what they believed should be done to address those perceived differences.

Beliefs are among the most constructive and destructive forces on our planet, and to be effective, leaders in industry and government must understand the nature and impact of beliefs.

Because they are so powerful, when one begins to think about the role of beliefs, there is a tendency to develop the impression that the impact of beliefs on behaviour is direct and one-way. There is a tendency to think that beliefs *determine* and underlie *all* feelings and behaviour. Yet it is important to understand that behaviour may not always be driven by beliefs, and certainly not always by conscious beliefs.

The link between beliefs and behaviour is considerably more complex than is captured in a statement such as “beliefs determine behaviour.” (1-3) However, it is a fundamental truth that beliefs play a key role in influencing behaviour and, therefore, in effective leadership. (1-4)

Beliefs Influence Perception and Attention

While we might like to think that reality informs our beliefs, much research suggests that *our beliefs are as likely to inform our reality* (1-5). Beliefs play a large role in what we notice and pay ongoing attention to.

We tend to notice objects, actions, and events that fit with and confirm our beliefs and to minimize or dismiss those that do not fit with our beliefs. Most people, for example, have worked with colleagues who tend to see only the good in others, those who tend to see only the faults of others, and those who tend to see others in a fairly neutral way.

Beliefs Influence What We Think

Not only do beliefs influence what people perceive and what they attend to, beliefs also influence what people think about what they perceive. In other words, *what people believe influences how they interpret a situation, event, or action.*

The easiest and typically least stress-producing interpretation of events is one that fits our prevailing beliefs. This interpretation means that “you don’t have to think about it.” You just “know” what took place and can move on. For example, if leaders believe that their employees always try to do their best, they will not be quick to interpret a performance shortfall as a reflection of laziness, and they will be less likely to become angry. If employees believe that the CEO’s judgment calls are generally correct, they are likely to think that the latest judgment call is also correct. If employees believe that a colleague generally makes decisions in the best interest of the organization, they are likely to think that their colleague’s decision to change a business process was made for the right reasons.

Beliefs Influence What We Decide

Decisions are made based on beliefs about the best course of action in light of desired results and current circumstances. Here are some examples. If a CEO believes that women make better leaders than do men, that CEO will likely decide to place more women on the executive team. If a Vice President believes that the market is going to fall for a particular product, they are likely to withdraw development funds from that product. If a public health executive believes that a potentially life-threatening virus may arrive in a local region, they will likely decide to invest resources to cope with its potential impact. If leaders believe that behavioural

traits are “hard-wired,” they are likely to decide not to invest resources in attempting to change the aggressive behaviour of an employee.

Beliefs Influence How We Feel

*“We all live in our own little world of beliefs ...
our beliefs drive our decisions and even how we live our lives.”*

– John Anderson, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, The Oppenheimer Group

Beliefs influence how we feel about events and actions. If employees believe that change will bring more opportunities and rewards, they are likely to feel excited and ready to get moving with a leader’s new plan. If employees believe that change is likely to put them at risk, they will be fearful and may resist a leader’s encouragement to change. If an employee believes that being a good person is important, they will feel badly if they believe they have acted in ways that have disadvantaged the team. Alternatively, they will feel good about themselves when they have acted in ways that they believe have had a positive impact on the team. If a leader believes that every leader should work as hard, efficiently, and passionately as they do, that leader will be impatient with those who do not. If they believe that these tendencies are what make them among the better leaders in the first place, perhaps they will simply feel privileged to be who they are.

Beliefs Influence How We Act

We all know that what someone believes influences how they act. We see it every day in ourselves and in others. If we believe that the best way to relate to aggressive people is to be proactively aggressive in order to ward off their aggression, our first line of defence will be a good offence. Alternatively, if we believe that avoidance is the best strategy for dealing with aggressive people, we are likely to avoid someone who has been aggressive with us.

As leaders, if we believe that people are self-motivated, we will give them room to do their work. If we believe that people are lazy or that they will not naturally work to our standards, we will watch them closely to be sure that they do not fail. If we believe that disobedience should be punished, we will react in a punishing way when we believe that an employee did not do what we asked them to do. If we believe an employee has undermined us, we may react in kind. If we believe an employee supports us, we are likely to reward them.

As employees, if we believe our boss respects our ability, we may take on more work and assume more risk. If we believe our boss thinks that “the jury is out” on our performance, we may avoid taking on challenging assignments because we do not want to run the risk of being seen to be incompetent. If we believe our boss has decided that we are not capable, we may take steps to look for another job.

*“Most of us can do more than we believe we can do.
When we believe that we can do more, we will.”*

– Keith Farlinger, Chief Executive Officer, BDO Canada LLP

Beliefs Influence Our Environment

In a very real and practical sense, people create the world around them through their beliefs. Here is an example: If we believe that people are competitive, aggressive, and dominating, we may interpret even the most altruistic offer to help with our work as an attempt to take it over or to take credit for it. Because we believe this, we may react defensively and aggressively. When we do, we are likely to elicit frustration and aggressiveness from the person who was offering to help us. This will confirm our initial impressions ... People are aggressive, competitive and dominating.

PRINCIPLE ONE CONCLUSION: FASTER, MORE EFFECTIVE, AND LONGER-LASTING LEADERSHIP

Successful leaders are in large part successful because they have influenced the beliefs of others. However, successful leaders can become even more effective if they think about what they do from the perspective of beliefs. Further, those who aspire to leadership roles can learn how to become successful more quickly and effectively by working with beliefs.

Leadership impact can be made faster, more effective, and longer-lasting by inspiring the right beliefs.

To master the Art of Leading with Belief:

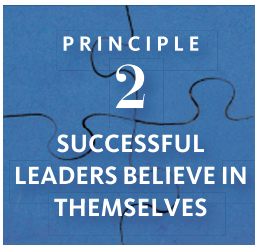
1. Take active steps to *keep the influence of beliefs “top of mind”* in relation to your behaviour, feelings, and actions, as well as the behaviour, feelings, and actions of others;
2. Actively question how your beliefs and the beliefs of others influence decisions, *develop a systematic process for assessing beliefs in the decision-making process*, and train yourself and others to assess the beliefs and assumptions underlying every key decision;
3. When you do not understand why someone is behaving a certain way, or not taking actions that they should, *ask them what they believe* and how they feel about what they believe;
4. When you do not understand why a group of employees is not engaged, or a team is not performing to expectations, *survey them to find out what they believe* about the organization, its leaders, and their initiatives, and;
5. If you want to change a person’s behaviour or a team’s performance, *seek to change what people believe*.

2.0 PRINCIPLE TWO: Successful Leaders Believe in Themselves

“A leader believes that he or she must change the status quo in order to improve the world and they believe they know how to make that change.”

– David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Peel

ACTION INITIATIVE TWO: TO REALIZE SUCCESS, RECOGNIZE POTENTIAL



The second principle of Leading with Belief holds that successful leaders believe in their ability and their right to lead. Over the many years I have worked with leaders, it has become obvious to me that, if a person in a leadership role does not believe in his or her abilities, they are unlikely to be successful.

Can you imagine the stress of leading without confidence, without belief in yourself? And can you imagine the difficulty leading a group of people who do not have confidence in you because they sense that you do not believe in yourself?

*“If you have confidence in yourself, it will show ...
two people can say the same thing, one with confidence,
the other not ... only one will be believed.”*

– Herb Singer, Founder and President, Discount Car & Truck Rentals

When you believe in yourself as a leader you have the confidence to hire the right people, including those with skills that are as strong, or stronger, than your own. You have the confidence to open the floor and ask those people the right questions, and you have the confidence to make difficult decisions when they do not agree. You will not slow down decision-making or allow initiatives to flounder. You will not be derailed by those who do not agree with your direction or approach once you have made the best decisions that you can with the information that you have.

LEADING, LEADERS, AND LEADERSHIP

Leading and Leaders

Leading is a process of guiding, directing and influencing people to move to a new place. A *leader* is the person who does the guiding. We are *primarily concerned with business leaders* – those who guide a group of people in the completion of work. This can be in for-profit or not-for-profit organizations and can be at any level of the organization from that of frontline supervisor to CEO of a multinational corporation. It can be on a project-by-project basis or across projects over time, and it can be in a direct or an indirect capacity.

There are *leaders who may not hold an organizational position* but who lead, such as in the case of “thought” or “opinion” leaders who influence others toward a new way of thinking by virtue of their credibility, intelligence, and persuasiveness. We might best say that these people “influence” as opposed to lead. While they may influence the direction of a group, it is not their formal role to do so. Hence, by our definition, they are not leaders. Having said this, it is clear that all leaders influence others and all those who influence people, in some sense, lead.

Leadership

When we say someone exhibits *leadership capability*, we are essentially saying that they are skilled and credible at guiding people to a new place, whatever that new place may be. A person can be a good or a bad leader but still be a leader. *It is important not to confuse a leadership role with an individual's competence at leading and fulfilling the requirements of that role.* A person may be a good leader or may be a bad leader but, good or bad, if the person is in a formal position designed to move people forward, they are a leader by our definition. But they may not exhibit strong leadership capability.

Leadership Philosophy

A leadership philosophy is a set of beliefs that define how a leader seeks to inspire, influence, guide, and motivate the people they lead. Beliefs regarding the nature of people directly influence and define leadership philosophy. For example, if a leader believes that people work best under conditions of fear, he or she may adopt an aggressive, dominant, and critical leadership philosophy and style. If a leader believes that people work best in a positive and safe environment, he or she is likely to be supportive and encouraging in their philosophy and demeanour.

“If you believe success will come from competing and winning, you will compete. If you believe that success will come from cooperating, you will cooperate.”

– David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Peel

Leaders Born and Bred

In order to see the impact of beliefs at play we can look at the question of whether leaders are born or bred. In a world where the precise links between biology and behaviour have not yet become clear, that is, in the absence of certainty, we fall back on belief. For some (Elliott Jaques, Stephen Clements, Ronnie Lessem, 1994), innate factors, primarily those related to intelligence, play a central role.

For others, leaders are created:

“The most dangerous leadership myth is that leaders are born – that there is a genetic factor to leadership ... That’s nonsense. In fact, the opposite is true. Leaders are made rather than born.”

– Warren G. Bennis, 2005

For still others, both forces are at play:

“I am often asked if leaders are born or made. The answer, of course, is both. Some characteristics, like IQ and energy, seem to come with the package. On the other hand, you learn some leadership skills, like self-confidence, at your mother’s knee, and at school, in academics and sports.”

– Jack Welch, 2005

Leading and Managing

We have defined a leader as someone whose primary accountability is to take people somewhere new. Extensive research undertaken by Kouzes and Posner (2007) has shown that the aspect of taking others somewhere new is the central distinction between a manager and a leader in the eyes of those being led.

“One of the fundamental differences between a manager and a leader is that leaders create the belief that change must occur.”

– David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Peel

Hence, we will define a manager as someone who is primarily accountable for directing and overseeing the work of a group of individuals in the delivery of defined objectives. This is, again, somewhat of an artificial distinction in that all leaders to some extent manage people and all managers to some extent lead people.

Effective and Successful Leaders

It is important to make a distinction between successful and effective leaders. What is important to note here is that *a leader can be effective but not successful in given circumstances*. The reasons for this might be that they cannot garner the support of particular board members, they inherit a business that cannot be turned around in a way that stakeholders would consider to be successful in the time that they have, or the environment

may change in unforeseeable ways that no leader could realistically be expected to have anticipated. In other words, *effectiveness is a necessary but not sufficient condition for success.*

When we use the term *effective leader*, we are referring to leaders who possess the skills to achieve the results that they are mandated to deliver, barring unforeseen or unmanageable circumstances. When we use the term *successful leaders*, we will be referring to leaders who are effective and who have maintained a strong track record of performance over time.

When talking about the beliefs of successful leaders, we are talking about beliefs that relate to effectiveness in particular leadership roles as well as about beliefs that support effectiveness over time and across situations.

SUCCESSFUL LEADERS BELIEVE IN THEIR RIGHT TO LEAD

“It’s hard to lead a cavalry charge if you think you look funny on a horse.”

– Adlai Stevenson

Among the more significant beliefs that successful leaders typically hold about themselves is that they have a right to lead. They believe in their ability to add value to others. They believe that they have, or will be able to learn, the necessary skills to take people further than they could go on their own.

From early on, leaders typically believe that they will be successful at something, even if they do not know what that will be. They have a reason to search for opportunities to take the lead. They may have a desire to make a difference. They may have a desire to become wealthy. Some simply believe that they have superior talents that make it their right, if not responsibility, to lead. (2-1)

“Even when I was quite young I believed that I would be successful. I didn’t know what I would do but I knew I would be successful.”

– Herb Singer, Founder and President, Discount Car & Truck Rentals

Over the years, I have come to understand that successful leaders believe they can have a net positive impact. (2-2) Some leaders may be cautious and hold back until they are certain they will be effective before taking a leadership role. Other leaders believe that they can effectively lead a function where they have a strong level of technical expertise but not in a general management role. Still others are highly confident and believe that they can be successful in any leadership role. But what is clear is that successful leaders believe that they have the ability to make a difference and have the talent to do so through others.

Regardless of their viewpoint or posture, leaders need to believe that they bring abilities and skills that are powerful and often superior to those of others. This is typically some combination of intelligence, experience, knowledge, focus, drive, and stamina. If leaders did not believe that they possess the competence to make higher-level contributions, it is unlikely that they would seek out leadership roles.

“I am confident in myself. I had a contract for seven years and I just decided we would be where I wanted us to be by then.”

– Keith Farlinger, Chief Executive Officer, BDO Canada LLP

The Importance of Believing in Yourself

Successful leaders must believe they can solve emergent problems and overcome inevitable obstacles. If a leader does not believe they have the capacity to prevail, they are likely to give up when they encounter roadblocks and to have difficulty “bouncing back”. Successful leaders have the confidence to expand their comfort zones and to work on initiatives and within contexts with which they are not familiar. Successful leaders are

both confident and comfortable confronting difficult issues and situations that arise. Less successful leaders often demonstrate that they do not have the required level of confidence in their own decisions. These leaders procrastinate, avoid difficult situations, and fail to execute successfully. (2-3)

“People who are not leaders believe in themselves in many ways, but not necessarily in their ability to create change. I don’t think of myself as being successful or unsuccessful ... I see myself as being in the process of becoming successful. You have to have a deep down belief in yourself that you can do it ... that you can be successful. You have to believe that you will figure it out ... that you will master the challenges.”

– David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Peel

The Inevitability of Self-Doubt and Worry

The principle that leaders believe in themselves is not meant to imply that leaders do not have moments of self-doubt or worry. It is also not meant to imply that leaders never have personal fears and insecurities. In fact, most leaders have their fair share of sleepless nights. All people feel anxiety when core aspects of their needs and identity are threatened, and leaders are no exception.

No matter how confident leaders may be, if they are motivated by status and believe that they are at risk of losing status, they will become anxious. If leaders are motivated by power and believe that they are at risk of losing power, anxiety will again be the result. If leaders are motivated by control, they are likely to experience considerable fear if they believe that they are at risk of losing control. The point is that successful leaders recover and their confidence in their ability to lead remains strong over time.

“We all have some self-doubt and sometimes need confirmation ... but you have to respect yourself, and have the confidence that you can do it ...you have to believe that your efforts will be successful. You have to believe in yourself.”

– John Anderson, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, The Oppenheimer Group

SUCCESSFUL LEADERS BELIEVE IN THEIR ABILITY TO TAKE CHARGE

Leading is, to a great extent, about taking charge, and it is a bold step to do so. It requires confidence. Successful leaders have a fundamental belief that they have the ability to take control and deliver results. They have a basic belief that they can be successful when in charge. Leaders believe in their ability to direct the activities of others. They understand that their success depends on their ability to encourage and oversee the activities of others and they believe that they are capable of doing this well.

Maintaining Control of Operations

Control is instinctive to the successful leaders I have worked with. These leaders not only remain in control in their professional lives but also of their personal lives. They are natural organizers. They believe in setting goals and in their ability to reach them. They have both an inclination to take control and a belief in their ability to do so.

Guiding Decision-Making

The successful leaders I have worked with believe they can make good decisions. They may believe that they are correct most of the time and, because of this, that they are the best ones to decide. They may believe that, since no one can see the future, someone has to decide so it may as well be them. They may believe that they have a broader perspective based on talent and/or experience. They may believe that they have

the intellectual capacity or a well-refined problem-solving approach that enables them to solve problems that others may struggle with. But whatever the nature of their beliefs, successful leaders hold the view that they can effectively make decisions and guide the decision-making of others.

One of the more interesting examples that I have observed of a leader guiding decision-making occurred in an annual strategic planning meeting I was attending at The Oppenheimer Group. At the time of this meeting, John Anderson's vision of a high-potential company had taken hold and The Oppenheimer Group had experienced year-after-year of exceptional success and growth. Leaders in the company were highly optimistic based on the talent they had acquired and the success they had achieved. Yet when it came to setting targets, John became very uncomfortable. He knew based on his in-depth understanding of the business that some of his leaders were overly optimistic about what could be achieved with available resources, particularly in light of challenges emerging within global markets.

Here, rather than needing to pull the team forward to increasing levels of performance, John, as the CEO, needed to pull the team back so they could set realistic objectives that could be achieved. Quite clearly, a leader is not always required to push or pull their team forward. Sometimes they need to hold their team back in the face of overly ambitious beliefs and plans. In the end, the matter is one of understanding the business you are in and exercising well-informed judgment.

“When the economy is strong, my role is to keep people aware of the downside risks. When the economy is suffering, I need to keep people aware of the upside potential. This was not originally a conscious plan on my part. I became aware of the need to manage this balance through experience.”

– John Anderson, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, The Oppenheimer Group

Overseeing the Achievement of Others

Effective leaders believe in the need to stay on top of operations and they believe that they have the ability to do so. They believe in monitoring and measurement. They know that, while their unique role is to look further out, it is their responsibility as leaders to run the organization effectively and to ensure results over time. They understand that their role is to direct and oversee the activities of those who “own” pieces of the overall process.

SUCCESSFUL LEADERS BELIEVE IN THEIR ABILITY TO SET DIRECTION

Successful leaders know that leading is about defining a new future and taking people to it. They believe that the impact and legacy they leave will be directly linked to their capacity to set and excel at implementing a vision. In order to do this, they understand that they must establish and believe in their own vision and that they must instill shared beliefs in others.

“Effective leaders believe in their ability to create a new future. You have to believe that you can be the best leader in your field in order to become the best leader in your field. You have to have a deep down belief in yourself that you can do it ... that you can be successful.”

– David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Peel

Creating an Achievable Vision

Leaders typically hold the matter of vision “top of mind.” They know that establishing a clear vision is crucial to the sustainability of an organization and to their professional success. Successful leaders believe in their ability to determine where the organization needs to be in the future. Whatever process they undertake to establish a vision, they believe that they possess the knowledge and the skill to create a vision that others will believe in. (2-4)

Instilling a Culture

Once an achievable vision is established, the question becomes one of how people will work together to bring that vision to fruition. That is, the matter becomes one of culture. While their strategies for building a culture may differ, leaders know this. Sometimes leaders simply model and reward representative behaviour and those behaviours become the culture. (2-5) This often occurs in entrepreneurial start-ups. At other times, leaders start out with a clear plan to instill a culture because they believe that a new culture is essential to success in achieving overall vision. At still other times, leaders take on a role with a mandate to change an existing culture. But whatever the starting point, leaders know they must create a culture that supports organizational objectives and they believe that they can successfully accomplish this.

Planning a Course of Action

Successful leaders know that no one can get to where they want to go without a roadmap that outlines how to do so, and they believe that they can create realistic, practical, and achievable plans. They believe that they can put in place the people, processes, practices, and tools to achieve planned outcomes. The belief is not likely to be that the plan will be flawless. Rather, the belief is that the plan will get everyone to the end point.

SUCCESSFUL LEADERS BELIEVE IN THEIR ABILITY TO EXECUTE

In a work-world that is increasingly complex and constantly changing, leaders believe that they have the energy and competence to maintain focus. They believe in their ability to drive forward a plan without becoming derailed when situations change or problems emerge. They do not assume that solutions will be obvious or that the resolution of problems will be easy. But they do believe that, if a solution can be found,

they have a good chance, if not the best chance, of finding it. They also believe in hard work and that they have the drive and stamina to do what it takes to be successful. (2-6)

“You will only be successful if you believe you have to give it your all.”

– David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Peel

“Nothing is free in this world. Anyone who wants something has to work for it ... and they have to work hard.”

– Herb Singer, Founder and President,
Discount Car & Truck Rentals

Solving Emergent Problems

Successful leaders possess the self-confidence to face up to challenges and identify effective solutions to the problems they face. That is, they believe in their ability to uncover and resolve emergent problems. They understand that assumptions could be wrong, calculations could be incorrect, and new issues could emerge. They know that being ready to effectively identify and resolve these issues is critical to the success of a plan. The belief is not always that there will be an instant and obvious solution. The belief is that they are able to take control of the situation and that they have the competence to identify an effective solution. (2-7)

In the words of John Anderson, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, The Oppenheimer Group, who began his career as a pilot, *“When you are flying, and a storm comes up, the task before you is to find a way around the storm. If you thought you would fail, you probably would not be flying.”* Keith Farlinger, CEO of BDO Canada LLP, believes that one of the best ways to ensure that emergent problems can be solved is to put a good team in place to solve them. In his words, *“We will figure it out ... we will find a way. If we don’t get it right the first time, we will fix it.”*

Guiding Processes to Completion and Achieving Results

Leaders believe that they can achieve a desired result. They believe that they can execute a plan through others. A significant requirement of leading is not giving up, and successful leaders believe that they have the drive and tenacity to keep going in the face of adversity. They stay engaged.

Successful leaders also believe that they have the judgment to decide when an initiative has achieved what it can, and this may not always involve full completion of the original objectives. Guiding a process to completion may, in fact, involve reshaping beliefs about the task at hand, as well as the definition of success, and leaders believe that they can do this when doing so is required.

PRINCIPLE TWO CONCLUSION: LEADING WITH BELIEF BEGINS WITHIN THE LEADER

Successful leaders believe in their ability to effectively take charge, set direction, and execute a plan. If leaders do not hold these beliefs, they are unlikely to be successful over time. They are likely to become derailed in the face of setbacks and others are likely to stop believing in them as leaders. Some essential leadership beliefs can be developed and strengthened through experience. But people cannot simply decide that they are going to believe in themselves. When it comes to believing in yourself, your beliefs must be fundamental. You can't fool yourself.

**Leadership impact can be made faster, more effective,
and longer-lasting by believing in yourself.**

To strengthen belief in yourself:

1. Take some time to ask yourself what you believe about your abilities and potential as a leader and *identify any beliefs that may lead you to lack confidence* in your talents and your potential as a leader;
2. *Ask those who you believe will tell you the truth*, including your friends and family, what they believe about your abilities and potential as a leader;
3. *Secure feedback, training and coaching in any areas where you feel vulnerable as a leader* and continue that training until you are confident that you have the talent to lead effectively in these areas, either on your own or by putting others in place to support you;
4. *Remember that even the most exceptional leaders experience self-doubt*. Recognize this, fight it, and like our successful leaders, don't let fear derail you. Life can be stressful. By realizing and accepting this, you can "take the edge off", and;
5. At those points as a leader when self-doubt inevitably creeps in, *keep in mind that there are people who believe in you* and that this is why you were given the opportunity to lead. Decide that you will not let them down.

3.0 PRINCIPLE THREE: Successful Leaders Inspire Belief

“Great leaders have the ability to describe their belief in a different future in a way that makes others want to share that belief.”

– David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Peel

ACTION INITIATIVE THREE: TO INSPIRE PERFORMANCE, INSPIRE BELIEF

Since beliefs form the basis of an organization’s mission, vision, and culture, they lie at the foundation of what an organization does, where it is going, and how people will work together to get there.



How a leader goes about developing a vision, establishing a mission, and instilling a culture will depend on his or her leadership philosophy. That is, it will depend on his or her beliefs about effective leadership. Employee morale, engagement, and job satisfaction are driven by beliefs about the value of

the work being done, the progress being made, and the quality of the work environment. The ability of a leader to influence, inspire, and engage people in change is dependent on his or her ability to influence beliefs about future needs and opportunities, and the purpose, meaning, and significance of the work to be done.

Whether seeking to instill a new mission, promote a new vision, embed a new culture, lead a change, or enhance employee morale and engagement, leading is, in its essence, a process of creating meaning and inspiring belief.

EXISTING RESEARCH ON BELIEFS AND LEADERSHIP

The importance of beliefs indirectly pervades much work. For example, it can be found in work on credibility (Kouzes and Posner, 2011) as well as vision and engagement (Rogers and Wellins, 2011). A few authors have begun to directly recognize the importance of beliefs in leading and

leadership (Dolan, Garcia, and Richley, 2006; Gostick and Elton, 2012). Of particular note here is the work of Shealy and his colleagues on the Equilintegration Theory, which can be used to directly consider individual and organization-level beliefs and values as they relate to leadership (Shealy, in press). (3-1)

Reference to the importance of beliefs can also be found in the writings of accomplished executives such as Jack Welch (2005), Isadore Sharp (2010), and General Rick Hillier (2010). Generally, the *emphasis has been on values* more so than on beliefs (Blanchard Management Corporation, 2007; Dolan, Garcia and Richley, 2006; Kraemer, 2011; Peshawaria, 2011). Within this context, a clear distinction between values and beliefs has not always been made.

While there is little directly written about the effect of beliefs on leadership impact, there are a number of fields where the effect of beliefs on behaviour has been documented. For more than half a century now, the field of clinical psychology has been heavily influenced by the cognitive behavioural perspective which holds that the way people see events and what they believe about them influences their feelings and behaviour – so much so that these beliefs can determine the direction of their lives (Beck, 2009, Ellis and Dryden 1986; Seligman, 2006).

The field of hypnotherapy has also focused on changing beliefs (Robert Dilts, 1990). As well, there is a considerable body of literature that ties beliefs to success. Much was written on this topic early in the 20th century by authors such as James Allen (1902) and Napoleon Hill (1937). As well, the literature on positive thinking can be seen to be directly related to the influence of beliefs (Peale, 1952). More recently, motivational speakers such as Tony Robbins (1992) have promoted these concepts. In addition, authors of self-help books have explicitly emphasized the importance of beliefs as a basis of positive personal change (McGraw, 2001).

BELIEFS ABOUT GOOD LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

To understand how leading is a process of creating meaning and inspiring beliefs, we can first look at prevailing beliefs about what constitutes effective leadership and management, as well as effective leaders and managers. We are taught these beliefs in business school and by corporate trainers, read about them in business journals, and learn them on the job from our coaches and mentors.

Our beliefs about good leadership and management are so ingrained that we tend not to recognize that they are beliefs. Rather, we believe them to be facts. To understand how a great deal of what we have learned constitutes belief as opposed to fact, we need only to look at how individual leaders can be successful even though they share different beliefs. We can also look cross-culturally to see how concepts of good leadership and good management differ across cultures.

Prevailing Beliefs About Good Leadership

A few of the more common beliefs typically held by Western leaders and management theorists regarding good leadership are that leaders:

- **Lead with a visionary approach** and maintain focus on moving the organization forward to its future destination;
- **Think strategically** so as to add value to the day-to-day work completed by others;
- **Demonstrate the self-confidence** to make difficult decisions, confront challenge, take risks, stand behind choices, and stand up for mistakes without blaming others;
- **Demonstrate credibility**, honesty, openness, and trustworthiness;
- **Leverage influence as opposed to power** in order to build productive and prosperous relationships, and;
- **Respect the value of others** by being empathetic to concerns, listening to feedback, empowering people, and coaching less senior employees.

Prevailing Beliefs About Good Management

One of the key beliefs held by Western leaders and management theorists is that there is a *difference between good leaders and good managers*. Managers are generally believed to think operationally, take care of implementation, and manage performance, while leaders are generally believed to think strategically, look forward, and inspire people. But we can see beliefs at play even here that could, and perhaps should, be questioned. A case can be made that every good manager is a leader and every good leader is a manager, and that they simply lead and manage at different levels. (3-2)

Having said this, a few of the more common beliefs typically held regarding good management and good managers are that good managers possess the:

- **Self-motivation** required to take on projects or business areas, successfully execute, and achieve team goals;
- **Teamwork skills** to cooperate across functions and divisions;
- **Skills and industry knowledge** to accomplish group-level tasks;
- **Capacity to manage and guide the achievement of others** by defining goals, organizing activities, monitoring progress, and evaluating results, and;
- **Communication skills** to interact with stakeholders, build relationships, and transfer information and knowledge to their teams.

Alternative Views

Leaders and managers do not always fully embrace prevailing leadership beliefs. For example, some leaders work primarily on the basis of self-interest and do not “buy in” to beliefs such as that they need to collaborate, be good team players, or be concerned about the professional development of their people. Their personal beliefs tend to be that

everyone should look out for themselves and that they waste their time and put at risk their potential leadership effectiveness by distracting themselves with the developmental needs of others.

As well, some leaders generally embrace prevailing beliefs about good leadership and management but hold other beliefs that tend to guide their actions in a different way. For example, a number of executives I have worked with over the years have been less than strong team players on their way to the top but have been highly successful individual performers. Because of their personal success they have been promoted. Once at the top, however, these same leaders are often among the strongest advocates of teamwork among those who report to them. In other words, they see the value of teamwork but they do not personally believe that being a team player is what is likely to get them to the top. In fact, in my experience, those who rise to the top tend to be team players on an “as needed” basis as opposed to in spirit. In spirit, they are leaders.

The influence of leadership philosophy can also be seen from the perspective of personality. The diverse personalities of leaders significantly impact what they emphasize and how they implement prevailing beliefs about good leadership and management. A leader, for example, who has a more control-oriented personality and believes that they must remain aware of and involved in all that takes place will adopt a controlling approach. They may still be effective as long as this tendency is not too strong but their actions will place much more emphasis on control than on empowerment. On the other hand, a leader who is by nature people-oriented and collaborative will be more engaging and supportive and will tend to emphasize aspects of empowerment more than those of control.

Leadership Trends

We can also look at the influence of beliefs in relation to leadership by considering trends in beliefs about what leadership is and how it should be done. For the most part, leadership trends garner steam by emphasizing specific aspects of the overall leadership challenge. For example, Servant Leadership (Greenleaf, 2002) emphasizes the belief that great leadership involves supporting those who report to a leader. Level Five Leadership (Collins, 2001) emphasizes the belief that personal credibility and professional competence are the key ingredients of great leadership.

The concept of *leaderless groups* emphasizes beliefs about the importance of empowerment and participation in comparison to considerations such as individual accountability. The concept of *emotional intelligence* (Goleman, 2006) emphasizes the long-standing notions that a great leader must understand themselves, understand others, and manage the relationship between these effectively. In other words, it emphasizes the need for a leader to have good personal and interpersonal insight combined with good social skills.

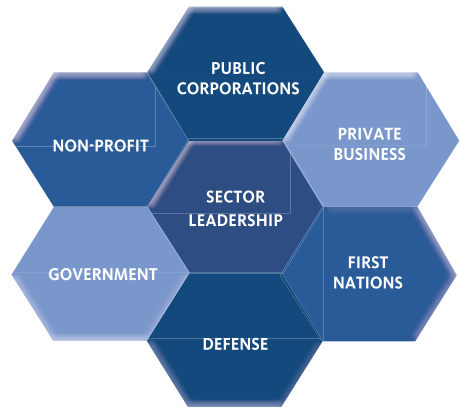
Organizational Functions

There are many beliefs related to the ability of leaders within differing organizational functions and about the transferability of leadership skills across functions. One often hears complaints such as “the organization is being run by accountants,” which usually reflects a belief that leaders are focusing internally on numbers and costs as opposed to externally on market opportunities. It is also often held that finance, technology, and human resource leaders could not successfully take over a company due to the belief that, since they have never been responsible for both the top and bottom lines, they are not likely to be effective.

Sectors and Industries

Another way to see the influence of beliefs is to consider different sectors, industries, and businesses. One sometimes hears private sector executives say that those in senior positions within the public sector do not know how to effectively lead.

They will also sometimes say that, if they were to assume those roles, they would be able to straighten things out in due course. Having worked at senior levels in the private and public sectors for close to thirty years now, my belief is that those who rise to leadership roles in both sectors are exceptionally intelligent and capable. The issue is simply that they emphasize different aspects of the leadership role as appropriate to the needs, complexities, and pace of their operating environments.



In the public sector, for example, there is considerable emphasis placed on processes in addition to outcomes, but this is likely to be the best emphasis if one is to achieve outcomes within any large organization operating in an environment with many diverse stakeholders and in which the stakes are high. It is also said that the private sector is not much constrained by politics, but anyone who works at senior levels in the private sector understands the importance of stakeholders, board members, competitors, associations, and geopolitical considerations.

With respect to apparent differences between leading within the military as opposed to within the private and government sectors, the belief is generally held that leadership in the military is purely hierarchical and a much more simple task of command and control. However, those who have experience with the military know that, should a military leader demean or lack credibility with their troops, they are as likely to experience resistance and failure as is a leader in any organization. (3-3)

There is also a common belief that, in the military, performance issues can be dealt with immediately. However, this is simply not the case except perhaps under conditions of war. Process and protocol apply in the military as they do in the private and public sectors. A military employee cannot simply be court-martialed because a leader does not like them. For sure, a military leader can make an employee's life miserable, but in what organization can that not be done?

With respect to differences across industries, I have noticed for many years now that senior executives generally hold a strong belief that their industry is sufficiently complex and unique that someone from outside of the industry could not possibly lead or manage effectively within it. My experience here suggests that some leaders may be more able to make a transition than others. Those who ask questions, learn quickly, and lead by empowering have the best chance. However, when it comes to matters of vision and the need to make good market and management decisions when others disagree, a leader has a much better chance of success if they have a deep understanding of the industry.

Societal Culture

There are many similarities across cultures when it comes to beliefs about what constitutes good leadership. (3-4) While there are many similarities, people of different cultures also have some quite different expectations of their managers and leaders. In fact, it is commonly understood that one of the major hurdles in cross-cultural leadership is for the members of one cultural group to develop a working understanding of what leading and managing means within another cultural group. One of the best ways to see how beliefs define good leadership and good management is to consider these cross-cultural differences.

At a broad pragmatic level, societal culture can be defined as a set of beliefs, values, and behavioural customs which vary between groups from differing geographic, social, and faith-based backgrounds. These values

and beliefs, which are deeply rooted and passed across generations, strongly affect leadership philosophies and approaches with respect to matters such as hierarchy, relationships, work-life balance, and the importance and meaning of time (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, and Gupta, 2004; Solomon and Schell, 2009; McCall and Hollenbeck, 2002). Within this context, research has shown that leaders who believe that the values, norms, and behaviors of other cultures are as legitimate as their own are most likely to be effective leading and managing within cross-cultural contexts (Solomon and Schell, 2009).

By way of example, in some cultures, it is believed that effective leadership largely occurs through the creation of collegial relationships, while in other cultures, it is believed that effective leadership entails overt displays of power. As well, in some cultures, a leader is expected to direct their subordinates in a detailed step-by-step manner with respect to how work should be completed. Yet in other cultures, it is believed that employees should be involved in the process of deciding how work is to be completed, have a right to anticipate that their opinions will be heard and, when legitimate, have a right to expect that their opinions will be accepted.

By way of another example, in some cultures it is believed that people are entitled to leadership positions by virtue of birth, that titles are important, and that people in positions of authority should be shown additional respect. In other cultures, however, it is believed that all people should be treated with equal respect, all people should have access to opportunities, and title and authority should be earned. Similarly, people in some cultures believe that leaders should be authoritative decision-makers, while people in other cultures believe that leaders should facilitate and coach their people in relation to how to complete their work. In a related manner, in some cultures it is believed that a leader should actively participate on their teams, while in other cultures it is believed that the key role of the leader is to facilitate the interface of the team with the larger organization. (3-5)

LEADING MISSION, VISION, AND CULTURE

“To be able to lead others to a new future, leaders must create congruence between what they and their people believe.”

– David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Peel

Among the core challenges of leadership are those of defining an organization’s mission, determining its vision, and creating a culture that will support the achievement of that mission and vision. An organization’s mission and vision can be instilled more quickly and will be more viable when leaders are able to create shared beliefs that the mission and the vision are sound and achievable, about how stakeholders will accomplish goals, and about the purpose and benefits of working towards those goals.

It is a leader’s role to develop, promote, and instill a set of beliefs among stakeholders about the organization’s mission, vision, and culture.

This means that leaders have responsibility for consistently articulating clear beliefs about the mission and vision for the future of the organization. In order to maximize the impact of mission and vision, leaders must also promote and instill collective beliefs, behaviours, and values in all who are part of the organization. In other words, they must promote and instill an organizational culture in which people hold shared beliefs about the way people interact internally as well as externally.

“People have to believe you will take them to a better place.”

– John Anderson, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer,
The Oppenheimer Group

LEADING ENGAGEMENT, MORALE, AND SATISFACTION

Creating organizations that maximize the potential of people is a key element of a leader's responsibility and ultimately of their success. This is accomplished by enhancing employee engagement, morale, and job satisfaction. “*Engagement*” describes the emotional connection that people, individually or collectively, have with the achievement of goals. “*Morale*” describes the collective spirit or mood of a group of people. “*Job satisfaction*” describes the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs or role.

Leading in the Realm of Feeling

Outcomes such as engagement, morale, and job satisfaction, as well as those such as empowerment, stem from feelings – feelings that are derived in large part from what we believe. Multiple studies establish links between levels of engagement, morale, job satisfaction, and organizational performance and sustainability (Gould, 1998; Kouzes and Posner, 1993; Koys, 2007; McCreary, 2008; Zuckerman 2012).

Given the strong link between these factors, to be fully successful, leaders must instill those beliefs that maximize feelings of engagement, morale, and satisfaction. This point has not been lost on some of the world's greatest leaders:

“The belief is this: Every person in the world wants voice and dignity, and every person deserves them. By ‘voice’, I mean people want the opportunity to speak their minds and have their ideas, opinions, and feelings heard, regardless of their nationality, gender, age, or culture. By ‘dignity’, I mean people inherently and instinctively want to be respected for their work and effort and individuality.”

– Jack Welch, 2005.

“Working closely with people from all walks of life, people at the bottom as well as people from the top, I had found that people, emotionally, feel much the same about work: They derive the most satisfaction from doing the best they can.”

– Isadore Sharp, 2010

LEADING CHANGE AS MANAGING BELIEFS

“My first task was to instill a belief that it was time for change so we could all move forward.”

– Laura Nashman, Chief Executive Officer, British Columbia Pension Corporation



Leading is about taking people somewhere. It involves change, whether it is change from nothing to something, as in the case of a start-up, or change from something to something else, as in the case of an organizational turnaround, merger, or technology upgrade. While the impact of beliefs

can be seen across all aspects of leadership, that impact is especially clear when leaders confront significant challenges or navigate and guide people through periods of change. Here, beliefs will, to a large extent, determine whether employees embrace required changes and the change process.

Unfortunately, many major change initiatives do not go well (Kotter, 2010). A key reason for this is that leaders sometimes believe that the tangible delivery of new structures, systems, and processes should be their focus. However, structures and systems do not deliver change. It is the people who utilize these structures and systems that drive the success or failure of a change process.

Organizational change impacts people on a very personal level because it impacts the way they perform tasks, their relationships with colleagues,

and possibly even their status and income. If internal or external stakeholders do not personally believe in the purpose and benefits of change, or in the organization's ability to create an effective path to change, the effort will fail.

To successfully lead change, leaders must manage and transform the beliefs of others that cause resistance and fear while, at the same time, encouraging beliefs that position the change as beneficial. And if the leader personally believes in the need for change and in the change process, it will be much easier for them to inspire those same positive beliefs in others.

"Communication with conviction inspires confidence."

– Laura Nashman, Chief Executive Officer, British Columbia Pension Corporation

Beliefs Across the Change Process

Stakeholder beliefs have significant impact at all stages of the change process. Beliefs define the initial state, beliefs define the need for change, beliefs define the target state, and beliefs define whether there has been success in achieving the target state. Beliefs determine when the process should begin and how long it should take for individuals to accept change and to adopt new behaviours and habits. In short, beliefs determine how fast and how effective change will be.

CASE STUDIES: THE ART OF LEADING WITH BELIEF

In order to demonstrate the power of Leading with Belief, we will explore how four highly successful Chief Executive/Administrative Officers worked with beliefs throughout the change process to successfully lead total organization transformations. Their organizations vary in size and are in quite different business sectors: an entrepreneurial produce importer; a large regional government; a national accounting firm, and; a large pension fund.



While the leaders we interviewed did not initially conceive of their initiatives from the perspective of beliefs, they were highly successful because they had, in fact, been working with beliefs through the five phases of change covered in our research: beliefs defining the starting state; beliefs defining the target state; beliefs about the change process; emergent beliefs during the change process, and; beliefs about the success that was achieved.

CASE STUDY A Common Purpose

The Common Purpose initiative was undertaken by David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), The Region of Peel. The Region of Peel is a highly recognized and awarded public sector regional government employing roughly 4,000 people. The Common Purpose initiative, undertaken in 2005, was aimed at creating a more integrated organizational culture united by the organization's Common Purpose of serving the community through an emphasis on employee engagement, customer service, and building and maintaining the public's trust and confidence.

Background: The Region of Peel was created by the Ontario government in 1974 and now serves 1.3 million residents and approximately 88,000 businesses in the cities of Brampton and Mississauga, and the town of Caledon. The regional government is responsible for services and infrastructure related to water delivery and wastewater treatment, waste collection and disposal, regional roads, public health, long-term care services, police services, paramedic services, public housing, para-transit, and social services.

Beliefs at the Starting State: When taking on the role of CAO, David sensed that, while there was much collaboration in the public interest, there was also an element of competitiveness and mistrust within the culture of the Region. While of the belief that there would be value in building on the more collaborative aspects of the culture, David observed that the competitive spirit of the Region had bred many good outcomes.

The Region had moved ahead with initiatives that others seemed to shy away from, and the Region's efforts in many business areas were recognized through accreditation and other award processes.

David credits his predecessor with making considerable progress toward building the organization. He notes that the former CAO had worked diligently to address many aspects of the organizational culture and to make changes to more fully engage staff. The previous CAO had led the development of regional values that were still very much a part of the organizational psyche. He developed a CAO advisory group of frontline employees and developed a formal quality accreditation process. He undertook initiatives to encourage members of the Executive Management Team to work together more closely as well as to encourage greater teamwork throughout their business areas.

Yet David sensed that skeptical beliefs persisted and in many ways still defined the organizational culture. He observed, for example, that one of the biggest challenges the Region faced during the quality accreditation process was to convince staff that the changes senior management was making were genuinely intended to improve operations, and not simply to secure another award for the CAO and Executive Management Team.

Beliefs About the Target State: David set out with a goal of building on the achievements of those who had come before him with a vision to make the Region exemplary in every way possible. He envisioned the target state as one in which employees believed that everyone is equal even though they possess differing capacities and fulfill different roles in contributing to the organization's common goals. The target state would be one in which divergence of thought is believed to be good and encouraged as long as ideas are presented in ways that move the organization forward toward the fulfillment of mutual goals.

The target state would also be characterized by a belief that most people will work toward a defined common goal as long as they believe that they have been included in shaping that goal and that their contributions toward achieving it will be recognized. The belief would be that people will work to the expectations of them provided that they feel involved, respected, and rewarded for their efforts.

Further, the target state would include a belief that not everyone can adopt the beliefs or fit into the culture that David envisioned, but that those who could not fit in would be able to work somewhere else with acceptance, dignity, and effectiveness. It would be understood that there is not something 'lesser' about them, but that their beliefs fit other cultures better than the culture envisioned for the Region.

In the target state, external stakeholders, beginning with members of the public, would believe that the quality of the Region's policies and services affects the quality of their lives, that the Regional Government is a competent organization, and that it efficiently, effectively, and sensitively provides relevant services. Council Members, who represent the public, would believe that the organization is well managed, provides high-quality services to citizens, is trusted by citizens, has interests that are aligned with theirs, and is important to their political success. Partnering organizations would believe the Region is a true partner that collaborates with and supports all other organizations to best serve the community.

From the perspective of internal stakeholders, employees would believe that the Region is a great place to work, that they can influence the direction that the organization takes, and that management has their best interests in mind while needing to balance the interests of all the stakeholders. Employees would also believe that they are responsible for the quality of the services delivered by the Region, that their actions affect the reputation of the organization, and that their services are valued. Frontline and mid-level managers would believe that their role

is that of a crucial support to all staff in providing the best services by leading, coordinating and managing activities in a respectful, professional, and collaborative manner under the Common Purpose. The Executive Management Team would believe that they have shared accountability for leading the organization in a manner that justifies targeted beliefs on the part of all stakeholders.

Beliefs About the Change Process: David was of the view that the approach to bringing about change had to be different from the past. He asked his staff to investigate and identify an optimal change management process and then trained a core group of staff in that methodology. The change management process that the Region adopted had five steps: Building awareness (what was being attempted and why?); building desire for change (what is in it for me?); instilling the knowledge of how to change (what do I have to do?); developing the ability to change (how do I do it and what changes in the organization are required to enable employees to change?), and; reinforcement (continued emphasis on rewards for successful change).

David understood that a number of prevailing beliefs within the existing culture had to be overcome. He knew that there would be a need to work at instilling the belief that the Common Purpose initiative and the change management discipline were being put in place for the long-term. In order to accomplish this, David provided a series of one-day orientation meetings to all management staff formatted as small working group sessions. This included about 400 people from Supervisors to Department Heads. David began almost all of these sessions with a talk on the importance of changing the Region's method of managing change, and he used the sessions as an opportunity to speak to the emerging Common Purpose.

David notes that it was a challenge to convince employees that there needed to be a change in the way they approached their work, not just a

change to the way they described their work. He was aware that too often employees align themselves with the latest trend and use the right words, but do not actually change how they perform their work so as to produce different outcomes. So David specifically set out to describe and enhance understanding of the new behaviours that had to occur in order to achieve those outcomes.

David held a strong belief in the importance of measurement to an effective change process and he used data collected from comprehensive customer satisfaction and engagement surveys to reinforce the change process in his frontline 'chats' with staff. David wanted to be able to measure the "reach" into the organization, or how deeply the change was being felt, as well as to measure the level of success in achieving the specific change outcomes that were targeted. For example, David sought to measure how much improvement had occurred in employee engagement levels, customer satisfaction levels, and citizen confidence levels.

David noted that, at the time, the Region operated on the belief that the measurement of activity was sufficient. It operated as if the belief were that activity is synonymous with productivity. David wanted to instill the beliefs that outcomes have to be measured in order to determine effectiveness, that evidence-based decision-making is important, and that it is desirable to involve stakeholders in matters of service delivery design and evaluation.

Beliefs Emerging During the Change Process: A positive belief emerged among many frontline staff during the change process that the Common Purpose was, in effect, recognition of the work they were already doing each day in their efforts to provide good customer service to the public. Within this context, David points out that people already believed in many of the ideas he was promoting but that these ideas had previously not been clearly articulated. Recognizing this, David built the idea directly into his communications that his vision was, in many ways, recognition of what employees were already doing.

The middle management group tended to be more skeptical and more difficult to engage. David found it to be a challenge to motivate middle managers to focus on leadership and the Common Purpose rather than on operational oversight of their employee's activities and business processes. While some middle managers endorsed the change more readily than others, for the most part, managers were not quick to embrace the belief that key parts of their role were to lead change and consistently measure outcomes in order to bring the Common Purpose to fruition. The challenge David faced was that middle managers typically believed and were quick to state that their teams were already demonstrating the Common Purpose. Because of those beliefs, they were not quick to change their behaviour, or to adopt new approaches.

A number of beliefs in the form of unintended and unanticipated consequences emerged during the change process. As an example, the Region had historically offered high-quality child care but had also done so at a high cost relative to other suppliers. The emergence of publicly funded full-day kindergarten in the province created an opportunity to address this issue by offering new alternatives for families and their children. At the same time, Council members wanted to find money to meet related early childhood development demands, so the timing was right to move out of the direct provision of child care.

However, employees challenged this from the perspective that deciding not to continue to directly provide high-quality child care services would run counter to the Region's emphasis on offering and promoting quality services under the Common Purpose initiative. The belief on the part of many employees was that the programme was "best in class" and that the employees delivering it were intensely engaged in their work. They believed that the Region would be terminating a leading edge programme that was a model for the community and an excellent reflection of the Common Purpose, as well as terminating the employment of highly engaged staff. In David's words, "This issue caused tension around how

I could continue to talk about the principles of focusing on employee engagement, customer service, and trust and confidence, and proceed to hive off one of our highly effective employee groups.”

At the same time, there were varying beliefs about what was in the best public interest on the part of different stakeholders including external partners and politicians. These beliefs ranged from the view that the Region was “offering an elite service to the few” as opposed to “a good service to the many,” which was perceived as not being aligned to the Common Purpose, to the view that the Region was providing a model of how services should be offered, which was in complete alignment with the Common Purpose. Within this context, David began to further refine his own beliefs about the implications of the values contained in the Common Purpose, at least in relation to this business issue. He then had to defend those beliefs in quite intense public Council meetings and to go on to influence the beliefs of employees and other stakeholders within the context of considerable disagreement.

This issue played out against the backdrop of a global economic recession that had created large job losses in the private sector and prolonged public sector wage and hiring freezes. There was also heightened concern among members of the public as well as elected officials about levels of public spending and taxation increases. Within this context, David needed to bring both staff and Council to believe that changing from direct delivery of child care to a lower cost purchase of service model was not just a reaction to appease current public opinion. He had to bring people to share his belief that the change would result in an overall increase in the volume and availability of service, and he had to do this at the same time as almost 1,000 unionized employees were engaged in a 13-day strike over proposed changes to compensation levels.

In the end, David concluded that the most fundamental issue was not really the provision of quality service but, rather, it was whether the Region should be in the business of directly delivering child care services. While

the belief held by many affected employees was that Regional leaders were destroying a high-quality service delivery programme that was in the public interest, David came to believe that the larger issue was whether the Region was best serving the public by offering a government-delivered child care programme.

David notes that this issue caused and enabled him to think more clearly and to refine his beliefs about what his job really was. He concluded that his role was “to make decisions that often led to recommendations to Council about the best choices for service to the public, meeting the needs of the community, and keeping employees engaged.” He also concluded that “one has to apply the principles inherent in the Common Purpose, or any change initiative for that matter, within the constraints of the business one is in and that bringing everyone to this understanding is not an easy task.”

Beliefs in the Current State: As David led the process, his belief that the Common Purpose initiative took the Region in the right direction became increasingly strong. He became even more certain that a balanced emphasis on employee engagement, customer service, and building trust and confidence could be achieved to enable the Region to best serve the public. To quote David, “It is government as it should be: Sound public policy effectively managed and delivered by engaged employees through exemplary service.”

The Region engaged a third party to measure employee engagement on an annual basis, as well as customer satisfaction and public trust and confidence every other year. During the period from 2008 to 2011, and in spite of the major change initiative that was undertaken, scores out of 10 for employee engagement remained relatively stable at 7.3 in 2008 and 7.2 in 2011. Customer service scores increased from 7.5 to 8.0. Against the backdrop of difficult economic times, the score for overall trust and confidence in government showed a modest decline from 7.1 to 6.8.

While David believes that the process was not perfect, he also believes that his emphasis on the discipline of change management contributed significantly to the success that was achieved. Looking back, he notes that one of the biggest challenges was how to consistently invest the effort that was needed to drive the message forward when other issues were pulling away his attention.

David also notes that he had to work at managing his own natural tendencies. In his words, “I was evolving the culture and I knew it needed ongoing care and feeding but I also wanted to move on to new ideas. I believe I could have continued my overt efforts to reinforce the concepts for a longer time. I could have found more ways to continue to talk about the Common Purpose in a manner that did not seem “canned.” Upon reflection, I think that I was too eager to believe that it had taken hold. And I clearly learned that you can’t delegate your leadership beliefs to someone else ... you always have to be leading beliefs.”

David’s philosophy of leadership was reinforced through the process of implementing the Common Purpose. He notes that there is a delicate balance between leading through example, encouragement, and conviction, and leading through the wielding of the authority inherent in a leader’s position. His belief is that, while the former is more difficult, it holds the potential for creating longer-lasting change in beliefs.

The Common Purpose initiative also had the effect of strengthening David’s belief that visible leadership by those who are accurately believed to be interested in achieving results for the right reasons is critical for the success of a new vision. Bringing the management team to full engagement with the Common Purpose initiative was difficult given that they faced, as had David, a host of daily political, financial, operational, and human resource challenges. Bringing the management team to the point where they saw the Common Purpose as the framework to guide the resolution of those day-to-day challenges required continuous reinforcement. David believes that, “In the end, the effort will be worth

it because the changes that occur in people's behaviours will be based on beliefs ... they will not be superficial. They will reflect a deeper commitment to what we are achieving ... a deeper commitment to our Common Purpose."

CASE STUDY One Firm

The One Firm initiative, led by Keith Farlinger, Chief Executive Officer, BDO Canada LLP, was initiated in 2009 and was aimed at uniting over 400 partners and more than 100 relatively independent local offices into a stronger operational and cultural whole. BDO is a rapidly growing accounting firm with offices across Canada and is one of the largest audit and consulting firms in Canada. The firm employs more than 3,000 people under a Partnership structure. BDO Canada is a member firm of the international BDO network through which it connects to global advisors in over 1,000 offices and more than 100 countries.

Beliefs at the Starting State: Upon assuming the role of BDO Canada's Chief Executive Officer in 2008, and drawing upon his years of experience as a partner, Keith sought to assess the Firm's overall strengths and weaknesses. He identified several sources of strength which he believed to be integral to the Firm's history that could provide a strong foundation for continuing to grow and strengthen the Firm. In particular, Keith believed that partner relationships with clients were more personal and stronger than in most other large firms. He also believed that the partnership model as opposed to the corporate model, which had been adopted by many accounting firms, was the right model for BDO. As true owners of the business, BDO partners legitimately and productively contributed to and had a say in the future of the Firm, as well as the right to directly take part in and enjoy the successes of the Firm. In addition to the partnership model, the Firm's 100 offices throughout Canada established strong relationships within local communities. Keith believed that this entrepreneurial history was a unique strength that made BDO a recognized brand throughout the Canadian market.

At the same time, and based on his own experience as well as on conversations with partners across the Firm, Keith identified a number of beliefs that he felt were less conducive to the long-term business interests of the Firm. Most generally, he noted that many partners believed that there was no need for change. Some seemed to believe that macro-level and international events played only a small role in their lives as partners within the communities across Canada, and that the Firm was fine as it was with offices being highly independent. Keith also sensed that many partners believed that, once you became a partner, you were a partner for life. As well, there was a belief that the Firm's clients were personal clients as opposed to clients of the Firm and that each partner must directly and exclusively deal with their clients. Associated with this was a prevalent belief that clients come first above all else, including before the employees who provide them with services.

Keith also identified a number of opportunities to make the Firm stronger. At the highest level, he observed that the prevailing strategic plan described the structure of the Firm more than it set out a vision for BDO and a strategy for achieving that vision. Hence, Keith's first order of business became bringing a team together that could create a clear vision for the future and a plan to make BDO Canada a stronger, more dynamic and leading-edge firm. The challenge was to develop a team that could create an organization capable of securing and sustaining the growth needed to successfully compete in a highly competitive Canadian marketplace.

Within this context, Keith believed that the Firm needed to become more tuned to national and international competitive market forces and that it must focus not only on what was working well at that time, but also on what would work best in the future. Above all, Keith believed that the Firm would be more efficient and effective if it were to act in a more integrated fashion, moving from a firm of individual partners to a team approach. In other words, Keith believed that the Firm would be more

competitive and powerful in the marketplace if it no longer operated as a collection of different organizations, but as “One Firm”.

Beliefs About the Target State: Keith’s vision of “One Firm” included shared practices, systems, and procedures where tasks would only need to be completed once and in one way as opposed to each office developing a unique approach. In Keith’s words, “It seemed clear that it would be more efficient and better to solve a problem once rather than 400 times.” Keith also believed that clients should be seen as clients of the Firm with all of the Firm’s resources available to them. As well, Keith believed that, in order to best serve clients, employees must come first. He believed that employees needed to be engaged and enthusiastic if they were to provide the best and most proactive services to clients.

Keith believed that the Firm should remain a true partnership with all partners having a say, but that once a decision was made, all partners should support it. He believed that a top-down model that dictates from head office would not be appropriate and simply would not work. He believed that the approach must be one that all could buy into and follow so that a single BDO brand could emerge. Keith believed that the Firm should work within Canada under a similar model to how parent companies adjust internationally for each country in which they operate. The model would be one wherein the National office would partner with Regional offices and a flexible team approach would prevail.

Beliefs About the Change Process: Keith believed that he needed to create a new team in order to effect the change he wanted to implement. He believed it would be important to attract people who would bring new ideas, be prepared to speak their minds, and be ready to promote and explain the vision of “One Firm” to all because they shared it. Keith sought people who believed in a vision for the future as opposed to a vision of the past and he believed that it was important that the vision be clearly and repeatedly communicated throughout the organization.

Keith also believed that it was important to directly involve the Policy Board which had historically operated somewhat at arm's length from the management team. In his words, "I refused to execute a strategic plan that did not involve and have the full support of the Policy Board." With that relationship strengthened, Keith recommended that the Board appoint a task force to review the Firm's many different profit-sharing plans and develop a single plan that would support the vision of "One Firm."

Based on a strong belief in taking advantage of natural opportunities as they emerge, Keith capitalized on the retirement of a senior executive to combine two of the Firm's regions under one leader who was an adamant supporter of the vision for "One Firm." Keith also took advantage of the availability of a strong leader in Quebec to engage Canada's French Canadian partners in the vision, and this began the process of building the Firm's strength in the province of Quebec where it had historically been less strong.

In addition to selecting a talented COO who possessed complementary strengths to his own, Keith recruited senior human resources talent, as well as specialists in the areas of mergers and acquisitions and business development. During the recruitment and selection process, Keith refused to settle for the "candidates" that he met. Instead, he pursued individuals who would not only be leaders of their departments but who would also look beyond their departments to the whole Firm. In this manner, Keith was able to build a team of highly capable senior executives who were fully engaged and intensely focused on achieving the vision of "One Firm," and on bringing the full potential of BDO to fruition.

In particular, Keith believed that BDO's human capital and business development functions needed to be transformed into strong, skilled, and strategic departments that would become agents of change and powerful forces for the effective execution of his vision of "One Firm." Keith also recruited specialists to help design and deliver processes for enhancing engagement and strengthening communication.

With new people in place, Keith charged the management team with accountability for operations and created an executive team that met every two weeks to focus on strategic initiatives. The executive team established a forum for the senior-most leaders of the Firm to bring forward issues and concerns that they faced in their functional areas so that the team could capitalize on each member's unique strengths and work together to keep key initiatives moving forward in the most effective way possible.

The first project of the executive team was to craft the vision and put into words what the Firm would strive for. The team drafted a vision and values statement, together with behavioural expectations, and then set out across the country to gather comments, secure feedback and build consensus. The team then launched the final vision with an upbeat, high-energy video. As well, Keith created and distributed a simple diagram depicting the three strategic initiatives that he believed would underlie successful execution of the vision: Growth; engagement, and; reputation. Keith believed that, with this diagram in hand, everyone in the Firm would not only know the vision but also be able to “see” how it would be achieved.

Keith knew that for the vision of “One Firm” to be successful it would have to be embedded into “the hearts of the partners” and he sought partner commitment by having all partners sign a commitment statement. The Policy Board created a task force to craft a draft partner commitment statement and the leadership team again headed out across the country to discuss the meaning of the commitment statement and to gain support. At the Firm's annual general meeting, each partner personally signed a large banner containing the Firm's five key statements of commitment. The banner now hangs in the boardroom of the National office and all new partners sign the banner when they join the Firm.

Keith also knew that, if the vision of “One Firm” were to truly take hold and have lasting impact, he must take steps to influence the leaders of the future. Hence, the new Managing Director of Human Capital, with the input of the executive team, created a leadership development program to promote the growth of future leaders who would understand, accept, and forward the vision of “One Firm.” Through the leadership development and succession process, the Firm was able to develop capable leaders who shared the vision and, by doing so, effectively ensured that the positive business impacts of that vision would have sufficient life to have lasting impact.

A key element of the change process was a powerful communication strategy. Keith and his team sought to promote and facilitate a transition in people’s beliefs through communications that were consistent, realistic, and straightforward. Communication came to the forefront with national tours (“One Visit”), quarterly progress reports for partners and staff (“One Report” and “Sum of One”), meetings for rolling out changes in the Firm (“One Meeting”), and a staff blog focusing on significant accomplishments in the Firm (“One Forum”). In addition, “One Conversation” was created as a Firm-wide WebEx that connected everyone in the country once each year to celebrate significant events such as the Firm’s 90th year anniversary.

The final element of the change strategy was to have a new compensation plan approved by the partners. The new plan sought to replace several different plans within the Firm. Gaining acceptance of the plan was challenging given that a 75% partner vote was required to approve any changes to the compensation plan. In order to secure that acceptance, the task force and executive team developed a project plan which included, first gaining the support of the Board and key partners, and then embarking on another communication campaign to talk face-to-face about the draft plan with all partners in the Firm. Refinements were made based on partner feedback and the final plan was approved by the

partners at the 2012 Annual General Meeting. Subsequently, the Firm implemented a stronger partner goal-setting process to focus partners on the right things to achieve the Firm's vision. In order to ensure accountability, that goal-setting process was tied to the new partner compensation plan.

Beliefs Emerging During the Change Process: When working to implement his vision, Keith encountered a strong belief that every office was different and had to be managed differently. The belief was that local partners were the only ones that had a sound understanding of their office, people, practices, and best business strategies. In addition, Keith encountered a belief that local offices had a better handle on core professional functions such as business development and human resources than did national experts. Further, he encountered a strong belief that the Firm was and should be “regionally led and nationally supported” as opposed to being led by an executive management team. The belief was that the National Office was, for the most part, there to support regional partners and to provide specialized technical advice.

Keith knew that changing such beliefs would be a challenge in spite of the intensive communication plans that he put in place. Understanding that the path would not be predictable, Keith held to his belief that taking advantage of opportunities as they presented themselves would be the best strategy. He believed that this approach would create the most fluid, powerful, and effective path to success. Keith also put faith in his belief that he could be successful at forwarding the vision of “One Firm” with strong team members who had complete understanding of the vision and intense commitment to executing it. He believed that, if he had people who knew what needed to be done in order to achieve success, and who were driven to succeed both personally and professionally, he would be able to successfully change beliefs and to implement the vision of “One Firm.” He put the best people in place and then believed in them.

Beliefs About the End State: Five years into the change process, Keith observed that the majority of employees had come to believe that “One Firm” was the right vision for the Partnership. Employees could be heard talking about and making decisions with the concept of “One Firm” in mind. Keith also sensed that more and more partners were beginning to believe in the importance of employee engagement, and the Firm’s engagement scores had, indeed, increased. As well, the Policy Board had approved a new strategic plan to take the Firm to the next level while reaffirming the vision along with its three strategic initiatives. Policy Board members were generally of the belief that approval of the Firm-wide profit-sharing plan was a good indication that the partners were now onside with the “One Firm” initiative. While there were some lingering concerns about how the plan would work in practice, there were many indications that partners were stepping up to assist one another more than they had ever done. And through a period of difficult economic times, working together as “One Firm,” BDO continued to grow.

Keith notes that there were some long-term partners who simply could not change but that their resistance did not prevent him from moving forward. In his words, “While I could try to win over resistant partners, I knew that it would be smarter to focus on long-term people in order to create strength for the future of the Firm.” Keith believed that new people coming into the partnership were the key to the success of his vision. Supporting this, several of the leaders who had participated in the Firm’s newly created leadership development program had now become among the most senior and influential leaders in the Firm. The vision of “One Firm” was clearly taking hold.

CASE STUDY **Expect the World from Us**

The Expect the World from Us initiative was created in 2000 and led by John Anderson, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, The Oppenheimer Group. The Oppenheimer Group, the oldest company in

Vancouver, is an entrepreneurial produce importer/exporter employing roughly 250 people. Among its many awards, The Oppenheimer Group has been recognized as one of Canada's fifty best managed companies for more than a decade.

Beliefs at the Starting State: In the late 1980s the Oppenheimer culture was that of a trading company and by the middle 1990s it had become more of a brokerage firm brokering fruit between growers and retailers. John strongly believed that the company could no longer be a broker, simply buying and selling fruit. Consolidation in the produce retail marketplace was occurring and, with the changing industry landscape, John believed that Oppenheimer could no longer be perceived as a middleman. Within this context, John believed that the company needed to develop a stronger relationship with growers based on trust, respect, and consideration if it were to continue to be successful.

With respect to culture, John observed an entitlement mentality during the mid-90s. Much as the company positioned itself in the industry, many employees positioned themselves as being out for themselves and sought to get everything they could from the company. John observed that many sales people at the time did not believe that teamwork was necessary. He noted that people worked on the belief that it was “all about them ... all about their needs.”

John wanted to move away from this climate of individual interest and entitlement that he believed made the company inefficient, ineffective, and unable to perform competitively in a changing marketplace. In John's words, “We were a company of golfers that needed baseball players.” While others seemed unsure of this, John believed strongly that employees needed to understand that the company and the job must come first and “me” must come second. He believed that the company had to be made stronger or jobs would be at risk and families might well suffer. He spoke to how, in the end, every person wins by putting the company first. He made it clear that people had to work hard at their jobs

and could no longer assume those jobs would always be there given the changes taking place in the market. He strongly believed that a culture of teamwork was essential and he wanted to entrench these beliefs in a new company culture.

Beliefs Defining the Target State: In the target state, employees would believe in a culture of teamwork internally and externally wherein all are treated with respect. They would believe that the grower is critical, is a true customer, and should not be taken advantage of. They would believe that the company comes first and that this is in the interest of everyone. People would believe that they had to work hard and that they should not feel entitled to their job. They would also believe that the industry was changing and that the company would need to make significant changes. Within this context, they would believe that John was a capable and credible leader who was steering the company in the best direction.

Growers would believe that the company was there for them. They would believe that Oppenheimer existed for their benefit and not just to serve retailers. They would believe the people at Oppenheimer cared about produce and that the company was capable of meeting their needs. The growers would also believe that the company's systems were efficient, cost-effective, and could provide them with the best return.

Retailers would believe that the company supplies high quality produce at a competitive price. They would believe that Oppenheimer understands their problems, has innovative solutions and products, and can help them promote their products. They would believe that the company could and would consistently provide the best quality produce, would stand behind its products, and could add significant value in marketing those products.

In John's words, "We needed to believe that the grower is critical and we needed them to believe that we felt that way. We needed to have retailers believe that we added value to them and to do this we had to diversify, provide full service, and offer year-round supply. We had to take more

control of the process and to set up systems, and we had to build a team-oriented organization that could deliver on this. In short, we had to ensure that all of Oppenheimer's customers and business partners could 'expect the world from us' if we were to realize our vision, reach our potential, and fulfill our mandate."

Beliefs About the Change Process: Although developed early on in his tenure, John was not quick to "go public" with the slogan or the promise that all could "expect the world from us." He strove first to change the culture and second to build a cohesive organization that had the capacity to deliver on that promise. In order to make this happen, John brought in outside consultants who were experts in key areas. The senior management team developed core competencies that supported the new culture. They also designed a unique employee 360 feedback survey reflecting the fact that, in John's words, "If our customers are to be able to expect the world from us, we must be able to expect the world from each other." John made office tours in order to reach every person in the company. He also oversaw the development of technological, administrative, and reporting systems that would enhance efficiency and effectiveness and would support the change initiative.

In order to drive the change that was needed, John undertook a highly participative strategic planning process, developed a staff-driven "strategic planning advisory forum," and created a staff-based "champions of change" program. Through involvement of frontline staff, John was able to reach the grass roots of the company and move past some of the less productive and strongly entrenched management philosophies held by some members of the middle management group. A few middle managers left the company to work in organizations that were a better fit with their beliefs, and John set about replacing them with people who understood the need to change, fit the new culture, and shared the beliefs that John wanted to see prevail within the company.

Emergent Beliefs: John notes that, in the beginning, many employees did not “buy” his vision and believed that he did not know what he was doing. Skepticism and doubt were prevalent. As well, many shareholders were not fully on board with his vision. Beliefs had to be managed both up and down within the company in order for John to execute his vision.

John shows a sense of amusement about this now. In his words, “At first they thought I was out in left field. They didn’t think we needed to make these changes. They were not aligned with the vision. Some believed it was a consultant’s idea or whim.” As all great leaders know, or perhaps come to understand, John believed that “the only way to address this doubt was with results, and that is what we delivered.” John knew that the requirement was to stay the course. In his words, “We had to be consistent in our drive and leadership around these issues. We had to stay the course and keep the message consistent. And I had to be the driving force.”

Beliefs About the Current State: Upon reflection, John notes that “there will always be some confusion about what ‘Expect the World from Us’ really means and that it does not mean that we do everything for everyone all the time. Having said this, the new culture has been pretty much in place since 2009 and the company’s track record of success has been outstanding. Many of the company’s people have only worked at Oppenheimer and do not always fully appreciate the success we have had or why. They do not completely appreciate the risks in the marketplace or the reasons for our success. We have been so successful now for such a long time that people have begun to believe that our success is a given. But it is not. We have to keep changing. Things are changing so fast out there that people have to believe that it is not done and that success is a moving target. We still have to continuously set priorities and develop the new skills that enable others to ‘Expect the World from Us’.”

CASE STUDY 4 Our Way Forward

Laura Nashman assumed the role of Chief Executive Officer of the British Columbia Pension Corporation in December of 2008 and undertook the Our Way Forward initiative soon after her arrival. The BC Pension Corporation is one of the largest pension benefit administrators in Canada, and the largest in British Columbia. It provides pension administration services on behalf of BC's College, Municipal, Public Service, Teachers' and WorkSafeBC pension plans, serving more than 1,000 plan employers and just over 426,000 active and retired plan members.

Beliefs at the Starting State: Having studied organizational design and change management, Laura very quickly came to believe that the Corporation was stalled in stage two of Richard Daft's four stage organization life cycle model. (3-6) She immediately began to establish the groundwork to create an ambitious business transformation aimed at moving the organization forward in its evolution and ensuring that the Corporation would meet the changing needs and expectations of plan members, employers, trustees, and staff.

Laura observed many examples of stage two characteristics. Most profound was a strong belief in collaboration. She noted that teamwork and a heavy reliance on collaboration and consensus sometimes took the place of timely and effective decision-making. While there was much good discussion taking place, successful execution was being hampered. Projects tended to linger and to not be completed on time, on budget, or within scope. Most significantly, individual accountability was not at the level it needed to be.

In Laura's words, "The prevailing beliefs seemed to be: There is safety in numbers and, if everyone is included in discussions, no one person will be held individually accountable; teamwork is good and necessary all of

the time, and the more teamwork the better; teams work well when they spend a great deal of time together, whether that time is value-add time or not; and the bigger the team the better, since more people will produce more ideas which will lead to better results.”

Laura also noted that, “In addition to a culture of extensive collaboration, there were also beliefs at play that produced over-reliance on the corporation to solve problems. These included beliefs that: Risk-taking is bad; decision-making is for a select few (the executive team); there is always another day; project delays are inevitable, and; formalization and bureaucracy are bad because they create constraints that inhibit the nimbleness needed to respond to ever-changing client needs/demands.”

Through extensive consultation with her leadership team as well as many key influencers at all levels in the organization, Laura began to formulate a vision for the future. She came to believe that, while there were many positive attributes of the prevailing culture that could be leveraged, some cultural attributes and beliefs needed to change. Laura vetted her ideas with the Corporate Board as well as other key partners and stakeholders in order to test her beliefs and the ideas she was proposing. After several months of detailed work with her team, Laura successfully gained approval for a strong change agenda which would set the stage for the creation of a new long-term strategic plan.

Beliefs About the Target State: Laura’s vision was that, over time, the cultural attributes that were impeding progress would be de-emphasized and slowly eliminated. People would thrive while the organization would realize its full potential. Laura’s vision included “the emergence of beliefs that: A culture of accountability is essential for success; saying what you will do and doing what you say are essential; outcomes are important; the corporation must always remain a people-first organization characterized by strong client service and care and attention to staff; innovation is

essential, and; decision-making must be well-informed and timely.” It was Laura’s strong conviction that the target state would draw on the positive aspects of the historic culture, including a strong client orientation, a powerful work ethic, respect for others, teamwork, and a commitment to “getting it right.”

Beliefs About the Change Process: At the highest level, Laura believed that leaders must inspire trust and confidence among their staff if they are to be successful leaders and change agents. And she knew that conviction and communicating with confidence would inspire the trust that would be necessary to lead effective change. Laura also believed that she would need to be a visible leader and that all leaders in the organization would need to agree on core leadership behaviours in order to effectively implement the ambitious change initiative.

Further, Laura believed that she needed a strong team around her to bring about such a large scale change and that she must put this team in place in the early stages of the effort. In her words, “The transformation must start with me but expand to include many other leaders. There must be a coalition of change champions throughout the organization. Change must begin with the leader but must soon become everyone’s change.”

With this in mind, Laura and her team undertook a deliberate cultural change process to ready the organization to embark on the ambitious program of business transformation. Laura believed that “any successful change agenda starts with the culture.” She believed that culture is the foundation upon which business change happens and that, without the right culture in place, business goals could not be achieved.

Laura outlined the desired culture as “a culture that is supportive of and aligned with vision and objectives.” In order to fuel the process, Laura wanted people to see (that is, she wanted people to believe) that “the organization is capable of much more, including more productivity and more value-added service for all those we serve.”

Laura undertook a structured approach to beginning the cultural and organizational change process. First she sought to develop an understanding of the organization and to determine how best to add value. She listened, learned, and took stock. She focused on what was working well and on those processes and cultural attributes that needed to be changed or improved. Laura listened to the stories people told, learned from those around her, and built trusting relationships with key formal and informal influencers in the organization. Along the way, Laura conducted an “early observations” session with the executive, the management team, key staff groups, and the Corporate Board to ensure that stakeholders believed that she was on the right track.

Laura’s next step was to brand the cultural transformation by giving it a name and associated attributes. Laura chose to name the transformation “Phase 3” so as to provide a strong message that the organization was moving from one phase of its development to the next phase, and that the evolution would continue. Phase 3 was promoted as a program to “develop, strengthen, and improve the corporation.” With that program would come new cultural norms including clear lines of accountability, productive collaboration, faster decision-making, and constructive risk-taking.

Laura created a change team and developed a Phase 3 communications and change management plan with deliberate messaging, strong visuals, and launch events. Laura’s intention was to engage everyone in the change through staff events and team meetings and to bring all to the true and accurate belief that “everyone was part of Phase 3.” She built a coalition of champions for the change program which included key leaders and influencers to whom she assigned crucial responsibilities for communicating essential messages.

The main thrust of the next phase of the change process was, in Laura's words, to "stop talking about it and just do it." Laura believed that there was a need to show tangible examples of how the organization was going to develop, strengthen, and bring a new culture to life. This meant instilling new beliefs and educating leaders in new ways of doing business. It also meant ensuring that leaders demonstrated new behaviours including those of emphasizing accountability, managing within time, scope, and budget requirements, engaging in deliberate and structured planning, and demonstrating transparent actions to staff.

Laura believed that, through the transformation process, it would be important to measure the impact of changes as well as the degree to which employees understood and accepted the changes that were already taking place and being proposed. Key measures were established to assess staff understanding, acceptance, and engagement. Within this context, Laura initiated new projects to identify an optimal client service delivery model and to determine those technology changes that would be needed to facilitate the change agenda. Also, new initiatives were launched to address business processes that were no longer effective or efficient.

At the same time, Laura strongly believed that all staff needed to "feel" the change if they were to believe it. She held a strong view that staff needed to see and experience their leaders behaving differently, making real commitments, engaging in less committee work, making faster decisions, and moving decisions "down" to the level where they should be made. She also believed that leaders needed to engage staff in Phase 3 by encouraging them to move forward with their own ideas so that they could experience the fruits of their labour in a series of "quick wins." Laura strongly believed that such behavioural changes and associated gains would signal that the Pension Corporation was indeed in a new phase of its development.

Finally, Laura's efforts were focused on reinforcing the change. She introduced new mechanisms to disseminate the central messages. She remained visible and encouraged other key leaders to continue communicating the core messages in order to "keep the brand alive." In Laura's words, "The effort was to ensure that the new culture became the real culture, the new reality. It was to ensure that it was no longer thought of as something new, but rather, the way we behave and the way we do business."

Beliefs Emerging During the Change Process: As the change took place, several beliefs emerged. Some were anticipated and some were not. Laura notes that "for the most part, and among almost all key influencers, there was a firm belief that what was being proposed in terms of cultural and business process changes was right for the organization." However, Laura also notes that there was some resistance. "Mostly it was in the form of 'disbelief'. There was a sense that what I was suggesting was not doable. Some believed that I just did not understand the organization, its clients, its history, its budget, its people, and its culture. They believed that, if I did understand, I would see why what I was proposing in terms of culture and business transformation was not possible." There was also some skepticism in the form of a belief that "we have been there and tried that" on the part of some longer-term employees.

Laura dealt with the resistance she encountered in a head-on manner. In her words, she believes that "it was my confidence, my conviction, my willingness to work hard, and my sound plan of action, that won the day. In fact what really won the day was that I was suggesting the very change that staff had articulated, that they were hoping for, and that management and staff had defined when the dialogue first began in early 2009. And skeptics came to 'believe' that it was possible, especially when they began to see and feel tangible improvements. As a result, a strong belief emerged that the changes must take place and that the transformation must be pursued."

Beliefs About the Current State: Evidence that significant change had occurred emerged from the 2009 staff survey. There was an unprecedented and unusual gain of 15% in staff's sense of having a "clear and promising direction" and an outstanding gain of roughly 40% in "confidence in leaders." The results remained strong in 2010. At that time, 86% of staff reported that they "believe that the Pension Corporation's strategy and goals are the right ones." Also, 86% of staff reported that they believe "the CEO is open and honest in communications to employees."

By 2011, all accounts were that there had been significant shifts in the culture of the Pension Corporation. Conversations changed as staff were encouraged to be innovative and to be the initiators of change. Anecdotal feedback from staff, clients, and the Board indicated that "things were different at the Pension Corporation." In Laura's words, "It simply felt different when you walked down the halls."

In 2012, buoyed by the new culture, Laura and her team created an ambitious nine-year plan of business transformation which was to become known as "From 12 to 21: Our Way Forward." In Laura's words, "We knew we were ready." The plan was approved by the Board and, as of 2013, Laura and her team had completed year one of the business transformation process. The organizational culture that she continues to shape and the beliefs that have been generated within the new culture continue to serve the organization well as the corporation's strategy is being brought to life. Laura continues to pay close attention to the culture and to the beliefs embedded within it to ensure that those beliefs are aligned with organizational goals.

When asked about what she might have done differently, Laura states that "lessons were learned along the way... mostly to communicate often, keep everyone in the loop, know when to push harder and when to lighten the load, know when you have enough information to make decisions, and know when to wait."

Laura's attention is now on what lies ahead – continuing to execute the strategic plan, deliver on commitments, and bring the “From 12 to 21: Our Way Forward” plan to life. She comments that “I believe that, at the Pension Corporation, employees are leaning into the strategic plan, eager to see it unfold, and excited to be part of it. The challenge remains that, while we are preparing for the future by transforming the business, we must also remain in the present and perform today – delivering quality service to all stakeholders. Doing both is proving to be difficult, but it is what we must do.”

PRINCIPLE THREE CONCLUSION: LEADING AS INSPIRING BELIEF

Beliefs define what we consider to be effective management and leadership. In fact, much of what we take to be truths about leading and managing are beliefs about leading and managing. This can be seen by considering assumptions about effective leadership and management across cultures as well as across business sectors. Beliefs underlie vision, create a common understanding of an organization's mission, define organizational culture, influence employee engagement, and play a significant role in determining the success of change initiatives. In essence, beliefs are involved in and underlie the effectiveness of all aspects of the leadership endeavour.

**Leadership impact can be made faster, more effective,
and longer-lasting by inspiring the right beliefs.**

To become more effective at inspiring and leading belief:

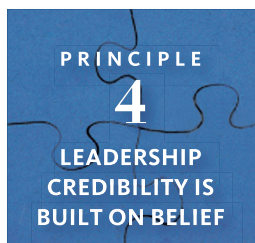
1. *Identify and target the five key beliefs* that you personally think people must hold in order to achieve current operating objectives. Then design and execute a plan to overtly and actively inspire those beliefs;
2. Make sure that your vision, strategy, and operating plans are believable by *directly asking people if they believe* that the goals are realistic, the process is sound, and people have the capacity to bring plans to fruition;
3. *Actively and directly assess and consider the impact of people's beliefs* when you are looking to place them in key roles that will influence the organization's culture;
4. Promote engagement, morale, and satisfaction by *promoting belief in the importance of the work and the importance of each person*, and;
5. *Overtly identify beliefs that may lead to resistance in change processes*, actively address those beliefs, and encourage realistic beliefs that will facilitate change.

4.0 PRINCIPLE FOUR: Leadership Credibility is Built on Belief

“Good people want to know what your vision is and you have to be able to tell them with conviction in order to be credible.”

– Keith Farlinger, Chief Executive Officer, BDO Canada LLP

ACTION INITIATIVE FOUR: TO BECOME CREDIBLE, BECOME BELIEVABLE



Leadership credibility is about being true to oneself. It is about maintaining coherence between ideas, promises, and actions. However, no matter what leaders believe about themselves, the reality is that their credibility is defined by the beliefs of others. When it comes to leadership, credibility is in the eye of the follower. (4-1)

LEADERSHIP CREDIBILITY

Credibility is established when leaders earn the trust and confidence of their stakeholders. Credibility is what people demand in a leader in order to fully engage with and follow them. If people do not believe in the leader, they will not believe the message. And if it is about you, then it is about your beliefs, your values, your actions, and your words. If leaders are successful over long periods of time, it is because they behave in ways that cause people to believe that they are credible. Leaders who are credible and successful through time hold beliefs and possess skills that enable them to inspire confidence within people that they can and will lead with integrity. (4-2)

Performance is the Foundation of Credibility

Credibility has been shown to be critical to effective leadership. A 2011 Accenture research study, *“What Executives Really Need to Know about Employee Engagement,”* demonstrated a link between leadership competence and trust in leaders and higher levels of employee engagement. Kouzes and Posner, 1993, found that employees seek to work for leaders who are honest, forward-looking, and inspiring, but also competent.

I once worked with an executive who had established a track record of poor performance in a succession of senior roles. He would successfully sell himself into the top job and, within a period of six months to one year, be terminated due to his domineering style. As a result of his exceptional intelligence and knowledge, ability to answer interview questions in a convincing manner, and ability to reconstruct history so as to explain past departures, he was repeatedly able to create the belief among selection committee members that he would be successful.

A belief on the part of the same selection committees that references were unnecessary or not likely to be helpful contributed to this executive's ability to secure a series of positions, as well as a series of significant severance packages. In this case, the executive was able to be credible with the selection committee but unable to maintain credibility through any reasonable period of time once on the job.

When it comes to leadership credibility, there is no substitute for a track record of success. Credible leaders are those who add clear value to the thinking, work, and performance of others, build positive relationships with employees and other stakeholders, make the right decisions, and consistently achieve challenging goals. A leadership candidate can be credible for a moment in a job interview as a result of their wit and ability to tell a convincing story. Some leaders can be credible for quite a period of time on the job for these same reasons. But in the long run, it is performance that breeds credibility and respect for leaders. (4-3)

Character, Credibility, and Belief

People listen to leaders when they talk, when they make promises, and when they make claims. Their behaviours, decisions, and actions are watched closely and evaluated against the messages they communicate. Doubt about a leader's true intentions, consistency, or capability to execute his or her plan will result in loss of credibility, and soon to follow will be a loss of support. If a leader wants to ensure that people are engaged in the achievement of the organization's objectives, it is

important that they ensure that people want to follow them. It is critical that they ensure that people believe in their capability, vision, and right to lead. (4-4)

“Credible leaders are those whose ideas or actions are believed to be necessary requirements for a better future.”

– David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Peel

Competence, Credibility, and Belief

Expertise does not automatically create credibility. Expertise must be filtered through belief if it is to translate into credibility. A leader who demonstrates exceptional skill and knowledge but who has not earned a group's respect may not be seen to be credible even though their ability may warrant it. The leader may fail simply because their direct reports do not believe that they are a legitimate and credible leader regardless of their ability and potential for success from other perspectives.

The importance of beliefs as a filter on competence can be seen in the fact that the weight of one leader's credibility can be loaned to another leader. If, for example, an influential and highly credible senior executive or board member expresses the utmost confidence in a new leader, that leader can borrow the more senior leader's credibility, at least for some period of time. This may even be enough to support the new leader through the initial phases of a new role and carry him or her to the point where he or she can make a credible contribution that they may not have been given the time to make had they not had the support of the more senior executive. (4-5)

CREDIBILITY BEGINS WITH A LEADER'S BELIEFS

*“You have to prove to people you can lead ...
you have to earn the right to lead.”*

– John Anderson, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, The Oppenheimer Group

The process of building credibility begins with Principle Two: Successful Leaders Believe in Themselves. If a leader does not believe in himself or herself, it is highly unlikely that others will believe in him or her. Having said this, a leader's beliefs also influence their credibility in a number of additional ways. For example, a leader's beliefs about leading, about how to accomplish tasks, and about the importance of continuous learning all play a role in determining their credibility.

A leader's beliefs define their leadership style and, because of this, their beliefs determine how they will be perceived and the nature and extent of their credibility in the eyes of others. Those who believe that staying in control is essential are likely to be seen by others to be in control and, on a bad day, they may lose credibility by being seen to be controlling. Those who believe that exercising power is essential are likely to be seen to be able to take charge and, on a bad day, they may lose credibility by being seen to be domineering. Those who believe that status and influence are important are likely to be seen by others to be confident leaders and, on a bad day, they may lose credibility by being seen to be overly concerned about their own position and status.

A leader's beliefs also play a significant role in determining their credibility through the influence of those beliefs on the effectiveness of their actions. Beliefs that promote effective action will promote credibility through effective performance. Beliefs that undermine effective performance will diminish the credibility of a leader over time. Should a leader believe that they cannot be successful unless they learn to delegate effectively, they will become more successful and more credible at progressively senior levels. On the other hand, should a leader believe that staying close to day-to-day operations is crucial to success, they will not be able to move to and become credible within progressively more senior leadership roles.

“As leaders develop new skills, and as they act on their existing beliefs, they develop new beliefs.”

– David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Peel

A leader who believes in hiring the best people, perhaps even those who are more capable in some ways than they are themselves, is likely to promote stronger organizational performance and gain credibility for having done so. On the other hand, a leader who believes that it is too risky to hire highly capable people who may personally challenge them and threaten their position is likely to hire people who perform at a lower level. This will, over time, adversely impact their credibility.

Beliefs about the importance of learning can enhance credibility. People generally look up to and admire leaders who demonstrate a strong level of skill and competence. A competent leader can have more influence because people believe that leader to be well qualified and fit for leadership. To maximize their credibility and success, leaders must believe in the importance of learning and must believe that it is a continuous process. By believing these things, and acting accordingly, they continuously become better at what they do.

“What I believe for certain is that I will be better at what I do tomorrow than I am today.”

– Laura Nashman, Chief Executive Officer, British Columbia Pension Corporation

LEADERSHIP BELIEFS AND CREDIBILITY ACROSS BUSINESS AREAS

There are many reasons why leaders moving across significantly different business areas may be seen to lack credibility and may well be unsuccessful. While the reasons are many, the most important ones relate to matters of experience-based knowledge. The generic skills of planning

and delegating are transferable across business areas, but the knowledge needed to be effective in another business area is typically not. As well, it is important to understand that, when considering a leadership role in another business area, it is not only important for a leader to believe they can be successful, it is also important that others believe they can be.

To be more specific, a leader from a different business area or industry may not have the experience and knowledge to make the best decisions when forced to decide on issues that others cannot agree on. They are likely to find themselves asking a great number of questions and many of these questions will be ones that stakeholders believe they should never have to ask. The consequence is likely to be that they will lose credibility, and with a loss of credibility, they are likely to lose the power to be successful.

PRINCIPLE FOUR CONCLUSION: BEING BELIEVABLE AND BEING CREDIBLE

While it is clear that ability and performance establish the basis for credibility, beliefs about that performance are what ultimately define and establish a leader's credibility. Stakeholder beliefs have the power to support or undermine the success of a leader. Today, leaders must deal with constant change, dramatic economic shifts, and the need to rapidly make decisions. In this environment, establishing and maintaining credibility is becoming more challenging. Credibility has a short lifespan. It needs to be nurtured and refreshed constantly, and successful leaders must keep the need to ensure that people believe in them "top of mind."

Leadership credibility can be created faster, made stronger, and become longer-lasting by pro-actively giving others reason to believe in your ability.

To develop and maintain leadership credibility:

1. Recognize that leadership credibility is not acquired through job title or position – it is based on what people believe and it must be earned. *Take every action in a manner that will give people reason to believe in you*, including taking actions for the common good, keeping your word, including others, and treating people with respect;
2. Take time to complete a *credibility self-assessment* by reflecting on your track record and, since others will not believe in you if you do not believe in yourself, reflecting on your belief in your own ability;
3. *Secure feedback at six months* and one year in each new role that you take on to find out what people believe about you and your performance. If possible, do this through a 360 feedback process and, if not, by directly asking for feedback;
4. *Identify any beliefs that you might usefully develop* in order to further enhance your effectiveness and credibility by reading about the beliefs of highly accomplished executives, the literature on success, and the literature on positive thinking, and;
5. Above all, *focus on your performance and track record* because there is nothing more powerful than a consistent record of successful performance when it comes to instilling belief in you as an effective leader.

5.0 PRINCIPLE FIVE: Leadership Development is Enabled by Belief

*“You can change your behaviour without changing your beliefs
but the end result will be unhappiness.”*

– David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Peel

ACTION INITIATIVE FIVE: TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT, PROMOTE BELIEF



The impact of beliefs on behaviour is as significant in the process of developing new leadership skills as it is on the process of using them. Learning new knowledge and tactics will not automatically embed new behaviours. Beliefs are at play when learning even the simplest of skills. Consider the

act of turning on your computer. You may have learned and now believe that you can turn on a computer by pushing the red button on the right. But if you buy a new computer and the “on” switch is on the other side of the computer, you must develop new beliefs about how to turn it on.

Knowledge and tactics are critical components of leadership development but it is belief or the absence of belief in new approaches that largely determines whether new skills will take hold and be implemented. In order to secure the greatest impact from developmental initiatives, it is essential that leaders, coaches, and trainers focus on the beliefs that will promote ongoing application of new skills.

NEW BELIEFS BRING NEW RESULTS

Changing leadership beliefs can open a world of new possibilities and dramatically alter results in both the short- and long-term. When you begin to believe that treating people respectfully is the best way to act, your world as a leader begins to change. You begin to receive more respect from others. When you begin to believe that supporting other people is important, your world as a leader begins to change. You begin to gain more support from others. When you learn to believe that admitting and learning from your mistakes is the best thing to do, your world as a

leader begins to change. You begin to learn from your mistakes and to make better decisions. When you learn to believe that focusing on results is the best approach, your world as a leader begins to change. You begin to achieve better and more consistent results.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT REQUIRES NEW BELIEFS

“Over time I learned that I did not have to be the sole decision-maker ... I learned to believe in teamwork.”

– Keith Farlinger, Chief Executive Officer, BDO Canada LLP

Some years ago I worked with a president who had exceptional influence and leadership skills. The problem was that this president consistently demonstrated an unwillingness to cooperate and collaborate with the presidents of other businesses within the parent company. His relationships with fellow presidents were not strong. At one point during the coaching process I asked this president how it could be that he possessed such exceptional skills at inspiring and motivating his people and building relationships with international executives as well as customers, but not be able to develop supportive relationships with his colleagues. He thought for some time and then he said, “If I did, I would become just like them. I would become just one of them.” What blocked his ability to be collaborative was a belief that he could not rise above his fellow presidents if he helped and became “like” them.

It is only when a leader’s beliefs change about what will work best that their behaviour and approach to leading will change. A leader can be taught that cooperating with other executives will build better relationships and, in the end, support achievement of their own results. However, if they believe that performing better than other executives is their “ticket to success,” they are not likely to cooperate and to become effective team players. A leader can be taught that punishing people for poor performance is not a good leadership practice, but if they believe that people need to feel fear in order to work to their full potential, their behaviour will not change.

A leader may learn that more delegation is necessary if they wish to take on higher roles, and they may learn more about the tactics and skills of delegation. Yet if they continue to believe that no one can complete projects as well as they are able to, and that they will fail if they empower other people, their willingness to delegate and their real skills at delegating will not increase.

“At some point a leader learns to believe that they cannot do it all themselves.”

– David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Peel

MANY BELIEFS CAN BE EASILY CHANGED

Many beliefs are relatively easy to change. These include beliefs that are based on simple information, beliefs that are consistent with a leader's experience, beliefs that mesh well with a leader's identity, and beliefs that fit within the framework of beliefs that define a leader's personality.

Beliefs Based on Objective Information

Sometimes new information is all that is required to change a leader's beliefs, such as when a leader learns that involving key stakeholders is more likely to lead to successful change initiatives than is not doing so. Beliefs often change with a simple period of experience attempting to implement what a leader believes will work and finding out that it does not. In these cases, where beliefs are not tied to identity or based on extensive experience, it is unlikely that there will be significant resistance, and change in beliefs will often take place quite naturally.

By way of example, a belief such as that “leadership approaches that are effective in New York will be effective in Toronto” is not likely to be tied to a leader's identity and is likely to be less strongly held. Even though it might take more than one example to the contrary before the belief changes, it is likely to change relatively easily with information to the contrary. This is what happens when we learn. However, a leadership

belief that is based in a leader's personality and identity, such as "I should be respected because of my natural talent," is likely to be more strongly held and is also likely to be more difficult to change.

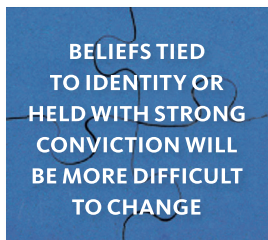
Beliefs Consistent with Identity and Personality

It is also comparatively easy to create new beliefs that are consistent with a leader's beliefs about who they are, that is, with their identity. In turn, it is relatively easy for a leader to influence the behaviour of others if the desired behaviour is in line with those people's beliefs about who they are. For example, it is likely to be relatively easy to inspire a person whose identity centres on fairness and consideration for others to work within the cultural framework of collaboration, a person who believes themselves to be a perfectionist to embrace the value of quality products and services, a person who believes themselves to be supportive to be helpful to others, or a person who believes themselves to be a risk-taker to take on an entrepreneurial assignment.

Leaders are also more likely to be successful when they seek to develop beliefs in others that are consistent with natural traits. Examples are inspiring people to speak their minds in meetings when they have an inclination to be talkative, be creative when they are lateral thinkers, and drive employees to achieve results when they are naturally assertive.

SOME BELIEFS ARE MORE DIFFICULT TO CHANGE

Every leader knows that changing some beliefs and, in particular, changing the beliefs of some people, is not always easy. If it were,



everyone who read the literature on how to be successful would be successful, everyone who read the literature on how to escape depression would be happy, and everyone who read about why change should not be feared would be comfortable with change. (5-1)

Knowing what beliefs can be changed and what beliefs cannot be changed is a key element of the Art of Leading with Belief.

It is also a key underpinning of effective leadership development. The most important factor here is how closely a belief is connected to a person's identity. Being tied to personality, culture, and religion, identity-based beliefs define our very essence as people. It is not difficult to understand why we might not be quick to let these beliefs go. It is these beliefs that have enabled us to function and to have achieved the level of success we have enjoyed in life. In fact, one of the most significant sources of resistance to learning new ways of leading that I have encountered in my years as an executive coach is the belief and the resulting fear that "if I change my approach I will lose my strengths."

There are also leadership beliefs that are so strongly held based on life and leadership experience that they are difficult or impossible to change. This is because such beliefs come as close as can be to the truth. Given sufficient experience as a leader, for example, it would be unlikely that one could be convinced to change the belief that not everyone can perform all tasks with the same level of skill. Since this belief corresponds so closely to observable facts, and has been confirmed over and over, it has become the "truth".

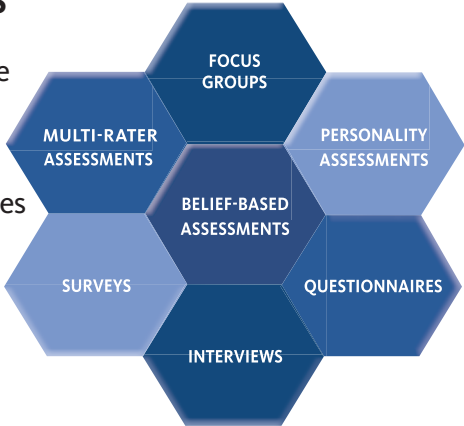
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF BELIEFS

Successful leaders invest time and effort growing others as leaders, either by directly coaching and mentoring them or creating opportunities for them to learn from others. If they are to create sustained learning in others, leaders must influence the beliefs that will facilitate and embed new behaviours and habits. The first task is to determine what beliefs can realistically be changed. The next task is to determine how those beliefs can be changed, recognizing that different approaches may well be required for different beliefs, different people, and different contexts.

Anyone can work with beliefs. They simply need to learn how. Yet there is much to learn about how to identify and change beliefs. In order to work effectively with beliefs, it is important for leaders and professional development experts to assess their own skills and to know when they should enlist the help of others in their efforts to bring about new beliefs. They must determine whether they know how to design interviews, surveys, and questionnaires to effectively assess beliefs and whether they understand the systems of belief that form human personality. They must also learn how to coach and counsel others from the perspective of beliefs, as well as how to change group-level beliefs within organizations through effective belief-based leadership.

ASSESSING LEADERSHIP BELIEFS

You cannot see a belief. Beliefs have to be conveyed by the person holding them or inferred by observing behaviour. Apart from the fact that a person may sometimes not want others to know what they believe, they may also not actually know what they believe. Beliefs are not always “front of mind.”



Most people, including most leaders, do not think about their beliefs. Often leaders are not fully aware of the beliefs that drive their behaviour. They are often not aware, for example, of what they believe about the rewards that motivate people, how people differ, and the nature of human nature. They may also not be aware of how these beliefs influence their daily decisions.

Inferring the beliefs of others can be equally challenging. Since many beliefs can drive a given behaviour, and since different beliefs may drive different behaviours in different people, inferring the right beliefs is not always an easy task.

As well, biases can come into play and the tendency to project one's own beliefs onto others is not uncommon. (5-2) So how do we gain an understanding of what we and others believe? There are a number of highly effective ways to do this. In essence, they involve reworking and reinterpreting our existing technology.

Belief-Based Multi-Rater Assessment

Multi-rater feedback, often known as 360 feedback, is a significant way in which we have been working with beliefs for decades without this fact being “top of mind.” In essence, multi-rater feedback focuses on what people believe about a leader and what a leader believes about himself or herself. The matter is not solely one of the leader's skills. It is also one of what the leader and other people believe about those skills, accurate or not. If a leader wants a quick measure of what they believe about their own skills and performance, all they need to do is look at their self-assessment on their last multi-rater feedback survey. (5-3) As well, if a leader wants to know what others believe about them, they need only look at what their colleagues said on that survey. (5-4)

Belief-Based Personality Assessment

Personality can be understood as an interrelated set of beliefs. A person who is highly conscientious, for example, is likely to believe that it is important to do well at anything that is worth doing. They are also likely to believe that they should be honest with employees and superiors, fair in their interactions with colleagues, and quality-minded in relation to any services offered to clients and customers. Further, leaders with this style are likely to be of the view that they should pay all employees equally for the same level of work, that employees should put in a full day of work for a day's pay, and that hiring practices should focus on the true merits of the person who is applying as opposed to on any other considerations. (5-5)

Belief-Based Interviews

Regardless of their form, interviews that focus on beliefs can isolate important factors that drive behaviour more quickly and effectively than traditional interviews that focus only on past behaviours or plans for the future. Behavioural interviews can be made more effective by emphasizing the beliefs that drove past behaviour in addition to the behaviour itself. Interviews that focus on how a person would handle a future challenge can be made more effective by asking interviewees about the beliefs that underlie their proposed approach. Interviews focusing on leadership philosophy can be made more informative by identifying and seeking to understand the beliefs that underlie a leader's philosophy. (5-6)

Belief-Based Questionnaires

Questionnaires that are designed to explore what leaders believe about themselves, others, and leadership will be more effective and efficient than those that look at simple knowledge. Beliefs, not knowledge, drive behaviour, so questionnaires that focus on beliefs will be more informative and useful. Belief-based questionnaires can explore a leader's beliefs about their abilities, motivations, personality, purpose, and potential. They can also look at a leader's beliefs about people, including their beliefs about human nature, how people differ, what motivates people, and what people can change. As well, questionnaires can explore a leader's beliefs about leading, including their beliefs about how to bring about change and about what a leader is and does. Shealy's pioneering work (in press) using the Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory (BEVI) stands out as an example of a well-constructed and well-validated questionnaire that can help people and organizations identify important values and beliefs. (5-7)

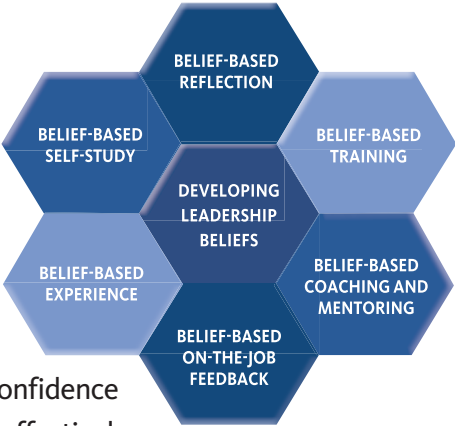
Belief-Based Organizational Surveys

Organizational surveys can be conducted via questionnaires, through focus groups, or through one-on-one interviews. Regardless of the method, the focus of belief-based organizational surveys is on what people believe about key aspects of the organization, including its direction, strengths and weaknesses, culture, processes, and leadership. Belief-based organizational surveys can also assess current levels of leadership impact in areas such as employee morale and engagement. (5-8)

By focusing on the beliefs that drive emotion and behaviour, belief-based organizational surveys have a distinct advantage over surveys that focus on what employees think or what they feel. A question such as “Do you believe that the compensation system is fair?” is much more effective and informative than a question such as “Are you satisfied with our compensation system?” If we know someone is unhappy but do not know what is making them unhappy, that is, if we do not know what they believe, we do not know much of anything that is useful because we do not know how to resolve the issue. Organizational surveys, whether based on questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups, are more effective and useful when they focus on what employees believe about organizational directions, processes, and leadership.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP BELIEFS

Leaders can improve their understanding of the impact of beliefs about themselves, about others, and about leading. Leadership skills can be greatly enhanced by learning about the impact of beliefs on motivation, perception, feeling, and behaviour. Leaders can also work with beliefs to enhance their confidence in themselves as leaders, learn to lead more effectively, and enhance and maintain their credibility as leaders. In order to have maximum impact on their own professional development and that of others,



impact that actually translates into new skills and behaviours, there is a powerful advantage for leaders and trainers to directly identify and seek to refine and develop new beliefs that support leadership development initiatives.

Belief-Based Reflection

A leader can become more effective by simply thinking about working and leading from the perspective of beliefs. The fact that many leaders do not spend time thinking about what they believe, or examining the impacts of their beliefs, creates an opportunity for immediate and significant growth in their skills through the simple act of reflection. (5-9)

While reflection has always been a helpful tool for leaders, it is by focusing on the beliefs that drive their behaviour that leaders can more quickly and effectively develop new skills, or get to the heart of why they may be having trouble doing so. Leaders can more quickly enhance their impact and can do so in a manner that is more lasting by reflecting on the beliefs that influence their behaviour as opposed to on simple ideas and rationales that are devoid of the conviction and emotion that actually drives that behaviour. Reflection is more powerful when it is focused on identifying and removing limiting beliefs and on instilling more enabling beliefs.

I worked with one executive years ago who was particularly prone to interpreting harmful intent and to taking matters personally. The simple insight that others, for the most part, act to resolve their own issues in ways that can have unintended adverse consequences became a revelation with lasting impact for her. Developing the beliefs that “they didn’t mean it as a slight” and that “it wasn’t an attack” was all that she needed to do in order to lessen her tendency to take matters personally and to “come out fighting.”

Years later I saw this executive and the revelation was still top of mind for her. Through ongoing reflection she had been able to make her experience as a person and as a leader much more peaceful and rewarding.

Belief-Based Self-Study

Articles, books, videos, and audiotapes focusing on topics such as thinking positively, becoming successful, and leading effectively can be very helpful in developing and changing those beliefs that can be influenced by information and persuasive argument. In fact, over the years, many executives have mentioned to me that books have been powerful enough to change their professional lives. (5-10)

Belief-Based Experience

While there are many factors that determine whether a leader's beliefs and behaviour will change based on their experience on the job, gaining experience is the most natural and effective way that most leaders learn the beliefs that enable them to lead effectively. Experience can be gained on a day-to-day basis in the regular conduct of work, or through specially tailored developmental assignments where leaders take on projects with a view to developing new beliefs and skills that enable different and higher levels of leadership. For example, a leader who fears speaking to larger groups might take on an assignment that involves public speaking so as to have an opportunity to develop beliefs that support speaking effectively, as well as the belief that they can do it well. (5-11)

Belief-Based On-the-Job Feedback

On-the-job feedback, including feedback gained through performance appraisals, guided experience, developmental assignments, and multi-rater feedback surveys, is extremely helpful to leaders in developing their leadership skills. When these processes are undertaken from the perspective of beliefs, they promote faster and more effective development than do traditional methods. This is because they go beyond the simple provision of feedback and move directly to discussions about the beliefs that drove past behaviour and might better drive future behaviour.

Belief-Based Performance Appraisals including in-process feedback add value to the review process by showing leaders how new and different beliefs can promote success. Belief-based performance appraisals emphasize discussions about the beliefs that lead to a leader's success or failure on the projects they have undertaken. Further, those discussions set the stage for projects they plan to undertake through the next operating period. By focusing on the beliefs that drive the leader's behaviour, a supervisor can offer information that will better inform the leader's beliefs and can provide alternative perspectives that the leader can adopt to become increasingly effective.

Belief-Based Multi-Rater Feedback inspires new beliefs by providing information that is either consistent or inconsistent with a leader's beliefs about the best ways to manage, as well as about their impact on others. Feedback that others view a leader differently than they view themselves encourages the leader to undertake a process of problem-solving. This process of problem-solving results in the leader examining their beliefs, deciding if their beliefs could be refined to promote better impact and performance, and working to develop new, more constructive beliefs. By understanding that multi-rater feedback is all about beliefs, leaders can work directly to change their own beliefs and to influence the beliefs of others. By focusing on the beliefs embedded in multi-rater feedback, leaders can use their feedback to bring about more rapid and effective development.

Belief-Based Coaching and Mentoring

Coaching and mentoring, including internal on-the-job coaching, competency coaching from external experts, and identity-based coaching from coaching psychologists, are exceptionally valuable tools for the ongoing development of a leader's beliefs and performance. Since beliefs are something that a person holds and are not the whole person, defensiveness is less likely to occur when the discussion is about the beliefs that underlie performance as opposed to the actual performance.

Since many beliefs can be changed, the belief-based approach to mentoring and coaching provides a rationale for a leader to believe that they can become better at what they do. All in, belief-based coaching and mentoring helps ensure that a leader not only learns from their experience, but does so more quickly, more effectively, and in a more lasting way.

Belief-Based On-the-Job Coaching and Mentoring from those who understand the business, the situation, and the people involved can help to develop more effective operating beliefs in a range of practical situations. Belief-based on-the-job coaching and mentoring are particularly helpful in developing leadership skills quickly, effectively, and in a manner that lasts. The power of this approach stems in large part from the fact that coaches from within an organization are likely to hold the most accurate beliefs about current and potential performance in light of the context. As a result, they are likely to be best able to instill realistic beliefs in the leaders they coach and to enable those leaders to take the right steps sooner and more effectively with a minimum amount of trial and error. (5-12)

Belief-Based Competency Coaching focused on specific competencies can be highly effective in developing the beliefs that underlie a leader's performance in specific skill areas. For example, experts in the area of conflict resolution can be highly effective at zeroing in on and refining those beliefs that underlie a leader's ability to resolve conflict. As well, a skilled negotiator can help a leader identify and understand those beliefs that will promote win-win outcomes. By virtue of their experience, experts are familiar with beliefs that help or hinder success in specific competency areas and they can relatively quickly bring the beliefs of the leaders they coach up-to-speed in those areas.

Belief-Based Identity and Personality Counselling by counselling psychologists is the most effective way to further develop those beliefs that are associated with aspects of a leader's identity and personality. While not seeking to change a leader's core beliefs, personality, or identity, counselling psychologists can be highly effective at working

efficiently and effectively to refine and shape the more deeply held beliefs that impact a leader's approach and performance. (5-13)

Belief-Based Training

Belief-based leadership skills training, either in-person or online, is a valuable tool for developing effective leadership beliefs and behaviours. Belief-based training can provide individuals with learning opportunities that enable them to reflect on their beliefs and to learn new beliefs. It also helps them to reflect on and learn how their beliefs can enable them to more effectively lead and manage the performance of others. Whether the focus is on skills such as leading change, negotiating, delegating, or performance coaching, training will be more effective and will produce more lasting development when it emphasizes the underlying beliefs that facilitate skill acquisition and drive performance.

DESIGNING BELIEF-BASED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PLANS

A belief-based leadership development plan is more powerful than traditional development plans because it works with beliefs, the most powerful agent of change. Traditional leadership development plans target knowledge and skills. Belief-based leadership development plans target the beliefs that underlie and determine the formation, implementation, and maintenance of those skills. In other words, belief-based leadership development plans emphasize the beliefs that facilitate rapid and lasting skill development. They speed up the process of learning and lock in the results so that success is sustained through time. (5-14)

In order to effectively tailor and design a leadership development plan, a leader or professional development expert must *seek to understand the total person*. They must understand that person's experience, intellectual capacity, personality, motivations, and natural tendencies, as well as their beliefs about who they are as a person and about how they are the same and different from other people.

A leader or professional development expert must also seek to understand the origin of a development need because the best approach will be tailored to the root cause of the development need. For example, a person may not delegate effectively for many reasons. It may be because of a lack of knowledge, experience, or training. But their delegation skills may also fall short because they have personality-based tendencies toward perfectionism and control. Perhaps they believe that others will not produce work to the necessary standard or have a strong fear of failure that blocks them from depending on others. The beliefs to be targeted and the manner in which they should be addressed will differ as a function of these potential root causes.

In order for a leadership development plan to be effective, it is also essential that a leader or professional development expert understand what beliefs and behaviours cannot be changed. For practical purposes in business, one can assume that it is not possible to change core beliefs that form the underpinnings of personality and identity, core motivations that guide lives such as a need to achieve, natural capabilities such as intelligence, and inherited dispositions such as introversion/extroversion or dominance/submissiveness. So a leader or professional development expert must know what these unchangeable beliefs and behaviours are for the person they are seeking to help in order to create an effective development plan.

Within this context, a leadership development plan can emphasize several realms of belief. First, a leadership development plan can target generic beliefs that promote success. There are several generic “belief inclinations” that help leaders. These include thinking positively, accepting and valuing change, and believing that conflict can be constructive. Leaders can develop these inclinations to enhance their confidence as leaders, their

ability to lead, and their ability to maintain credibility. Leaders can also learn how to better develop these inclinations and beliefs in others so that people can accept essential changes, work more productively, and relate more effectively.

Second, a leadership development plan can target personal and interpersonal beliefs. A leader may benefit most from refining their beliefs about themselves, that is, by refining their beliefs about their strengths, their weaknesses, what they do best, and what they are capable of doing. Alternatively, a leader may benefit most from targeting further development of their beliefs about others, that is, by targeting their beliefs about what motivates people, how people differ, and what people can change.

Finally, a leadership development plan can target beliefs that underlie specific skills and competencies. Included are skills such as managing change, negotiating, resolving conflict, delegating, and coaching and mentoring others. Also included here are beliefs about how to engage, empower, and motivate people.

PRINCIPLE FIVE CONCLUSION: TURNING LEARNING INTO ACTION THROUGH BELIEF

Leadership development will be most effective when it impacts a leader's beliefs. If leaders are to learn new skills by self-taught methods or through others, new beliefs need to be developed to translate learning into new behaviour. Insufficient focus on enabling beliefs is a key reason why so often leaders secure advice or receive training but fail to develop and implement more advanced skills. Leadership development requires new beliefs if it is to have "legs."

Like all plans, a belief-based leadership development plan works best when based on the effective assessment of current skills, a clear definition of needs and related priorities, and specific goals and action steps, including steps for gaining experience, securing training, and receiving feedback and coaching. Unlike traditional plans, belief-based leadership development plans place an emphasis on the active ingredient for success. That is, they focus on the formation of beliefs that underlie and fuel success in the rapid and effective development of advanced leadership skills.

**Belief-based leadership development will be faster,
more effective, and longer-lasting.**

To more quickly and effectively develop as a leader:

1. *Re-interpret and where necessary redesign existing tools*, including behavioural interviews, multi-rater feedback questionnaires, organizational surveys, and performance reviews, from the perspective of beliefs;
2. When attempting to develop others, *seek to understand the total person*, including their natural talents, personality, motivations, and beliefs about who they are and about how they are the same or different from other people. If you are seeking to develop yourself, use the same approach;
3. Determine whether the beliefs to be developed are information-based, experience-based, or personality-based and *use the development method that fits the origin and nature of the belief*.

Emphasize reading and training to teach beliefs that are based on simple information, developmental assignments to instill beliefs that must be solidified through experience, and one-on-one coaching and counselling to foster development of more deeply held beliefs. *Never attempt to change core beliefs* that form the underpinnings of a person's values, personality, or identity, not only for philosophical reasons, but also because you can't;

4. *Believe in the plan.* You will not implement a plan you do not believe in, so until you do believe in it, keep planning. Set new objectives that you believe to be more realistic and adopt new methods that you believe will work. If you are developing others, take time to ensure that they believe in the plan before you consider the plan to be completed, and;
5. *Conscientiously implement "best in class" practices for executing professional development plans* including the use of SMART goals. A belief-based leadership development plan, poorly implemented, will be no more effective than any other plan.

CONCLUSION:

The Art of Leading with Belief

It is easy to take the obvious for granted in life and it is easy to miss the opportunities that lie in working with the obvious. This holds true of the impact of beliefs in business and leadership.

It is not that leaders have missed the importance of beliefs. Leaders have worked very hard, for example, at encouraging others to join them in a vision. While they might not have thought of it this way, they have been, in essence, seeking to encourage people to share their beliefs about the organization, about where it is and should be in the future, and about how it should get there. But the essential ingredient, that of beliefs, has not typically been brought to the forefront.

Leaders have worked very hard at instilling organization cultures. When they have done this, and while they may not have thought about it in these terms, they have been seeking to instill a shared set of beliefs about how people should work together to achieve results. Leaders have also worked diligently to engage people within these cultures, and engagement is a product of an employee's beliefs about their work, their organization, and their colleagues.

Leaders who are concerned about losing those employees who seem disengaged will often ask, "How do you feel about your work and the company?" but will rarely ask, "What do you believe about your work and the company?" Yet if a leader wants to know if an employee is likely to be with the organization next year, they should ask the employee what they believe about their boss, their colleagues, and the organization. They should also ask the employee what they believe about their role, how their role contributes to the goals of the organization, and how their role contributes to their own professional goals. These beliefs will largely determine the employee's behaviour ... and whether they will be with the organization next year.

Leaders invest untold amounts of time and endless effort encouraging employees to adopt necessary changes in an organization's direction, structure, and processes so that the organization can remain in tune with the ever-changing environment. Yet leaders tend not to ask whether employees believe that the planned direction is beneficial to the organization or beneficial to how they accomplish their work. They tend not to ask whether people believe the proposed change process will work, whether people believe everyone has the right skills and tools to implement the change, what people believe are the obstacles to change, and what people believe about the probability of a successful change process. If leaders uncovered more about what their employees believe about the benefits of change and the change processes being advocated, they would have an opportunity to "ready" the organization in advance, reduce resistance, and increase the speed with which employees embrace proposed changes.

For all of its importance, leaders rarely focus deliberately, directly, and overtly on beliefs. Leaders are more likely to ask employees "What do you think?" as opposed to "What do you believe?" when they want to know whether those employees are on board with an initiative. Yet if a leader wants to know about what an employee is likely to do, they would do better to ask that employee what he or she believes. When a leader asks an employee what they believe, that leader learns about the thoughts that they hold with conviction, not just about their thoughts. That is, the leader learns about those thoughts that are likely to drive employee behaviour.

Leading with Belief is not only about what leaders should ask. It is also about what they should convey about their own beliefs. Successful leaders appropriately let people know their beliefs about the organization, the environment, and the organization's current and future place in that environment. Successful leaders also convey their belief in their people.

By conveying their beliefs, leaders inform, empower, and engage people. And by living what they believe, they inspire respect, trust, and confidence.

In the end, Leading with Belief is about credibility and results. To be credible, a leader must demonstrate results. And the best results are achieved when a leader has the courage to believe in a destination and in a path to get there. They are achieved when a leader knows what they believe but remains open to the beliefs of others and to new beliefs as the business environment continuously changes. The best results are achieved when a leader understands what they and others believe and works directly with those beliefs. When a leader does this, others will believe in them. Credibility is about belief, credibility fuels conviction, and conviction drives results.

**Belief takes vision out of the boardroom and into
the hearts of people.**

Focusing on the beliefs that drive business behaviour leads to more useful and powerful information and to greater levels of engagement and performance. That information enables leaders to lead more effectively. It enables leaders to achieve results faster in a world where faster is better. Conveying your beliefs as a leader enables others to clearly understand who you are and where you want to go. It invites a different kind of discussion and inspires a more meaningful dialogue that emphasizes the beliefs that people hold as opposed to who is right or who is wrong. When, as a leader, you talk about what you truly believe, employees sense your conviction and become inspired by it.

This is the Art of Leading with Belief.

NOTES

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

(0-1) **John Anderson**, a teenager at the time, joined The Oppenheimer Group in 1975 as a labourer in the company's warehouse. He soon moved into sales and then quickly advanced to sales management roles. In 1988, John was promoted to Chief Operating Officer, and in 1993 he took over as Oppenheimer's President and Chief Executive Officer. He became the majority owner and Chairman of the company in 2001. Outside of the company, John established himself as an influential leader within the produce industry. He has held various director-level positions at the Canadian Produce Marketing Association, including serving as its Chair in 2000 and then as its past Chair. He has provided leadership in various committees within the US Produce Marketing Association (PMA) including sitting on its Board of Directors and its Leadership Committee. John has held the position of Chairman of the PMA's International Advisory Council and has served as a Director of the PMA Retail Board. John has also held the positions of Chair of the PMA Foundation, Chair of the North American Trade Committee, and Chair of the PMA Foundation for Industry Talent. John's contribution to the produce industry has resulted in several professional awards. He was named The Packer's "Canadian Produce Man of the Year" for 2000, and was chosen as Ernst and Young's "Entrepreneur of the Year" for Canada's Pacific Region in 2002. In 2012, John became the only person to have been awarded "Produce Man of the Year" in both Canada and the United States. John is also an avid aviation buff who holds a commercial pilot's licence, and he has owned and operated the Vancouver-based corporate airline, Anderson Air, since 1980.

(0-2) **Keith Farlinger** became BDO Canada's Chief Executive Officer in September 2008 after serving as Regional Managing Partner for the Firm's Toronto Region. Keith has over 35 years of business experience and has held leadership positions in the accounting industry, as well as in multiple business associations. He was Chair of the BDO Policy Board from 1997-1998 and served on the board from 1995 to 2001. In addition, he has served on the Firm's Senior Management Team since 2000. Keith has been on the BDO International Policy Board, which is the 5th largest international accounting network, since 2008. He was Chair of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario (ICAO) from 2006 to 2008 and was a member of the governing council from 2001 until 2009. Keith is actively involved in his alma mater, the University of Waterloo, where he received his Bachelor of Mathematics in 1977. Keith received his CA designation in 1978 and his FCA in 1997.

(0-3) **Laura Nashman** assumed the role of Chief Executive Officer of the British Columbia Pension Corporation in December of 2008. Prior to joining the Pension Corporation, Laura served as a Commissioner for the Region of Peel in Ontario. In 2011, Laura was named to Vancouver Magazine's Power 50 list and in 2010 was named one of Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women by the Women's Executive Network and the Financial Post. Laura is an active volunteer mentor for women in leadership roles. She holds Bachelor of Arts and Master of Industrial Relations degrees from the University of Toronto.

(0-4) **Herb Singer**, founder and president of Discount Car & Truck Rentals, was born in Siberia, Russia, in 1945. He emigrated from Israel to Brazil and then to the United States at the age of 14. He attended high school in Brooklyn, New York. At age 17, Herb forayed into the car rental industry, cleaning vehicles at a local car rental company. He studied business administration at New York University and carried on with his studies at Ryerson Polytechnic Institute after arriving in Canada in 1966. Once in Canada, Herb continued to have an interest in the car rental business and gained employment with Budget Rent-A-Car in Toronto. Over the years

at Budget, he gained valuable accounting knowledge, marketing, and management experience and quickly rose to a managerial position. Herb eventually became president of his own Budget sub-franchise and later went on to open the first Discount Car & Truck Rentals office in Hamilton in 1980. Discount now has over 300 locations across Canada. Discount is a well-publicized Canadian success story and a strong vehicle rental brand across the country with representation in Australia as well. Herb lives in Toronto, Canada. He is married with three children, all of whom are involved in the Discount Car and Truck Rentals business.

(0-5) **David Szwarc** has been serving the public for over 30 years. As the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of the Region of Peel, David is responsible for the co-ordination of all administrative and service delivery functions, and for the overall management of the Regional Corporation. Peel has achieved the National Quality Institute's Canada Award of Excellence (2006-2009) and the Canada Order of Excellence (2009-2011), being the first Canadian municipality to receive those honours. Prior to being appointed as CAO in October 2005, David served as Commissioner of Social Services and Director of Ontario Works in Peel. David has also held positions with the Government of Ontario and the Region of Halton. David has received the Rotary International Centennial Award for Professional Excellence. His work at Peel has been recognized with the IPAC Public Sector Leadership Award (Gold) and the 2012 Heintzman National Leadership award. David is a Fellow in the School of Policy Studies at Queen's University. He also serves on several provincial and national organizations, including the Advisory Board for the Municipal Leadership program with the Schulich School of Business at York University, the Board of Directors for the Ontario Housing Services Corporation, and is Vice-Chair of the Institute for Citizen-Centred Services Certification Board, Ottawa. David has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Toronto and a Master's degree in Public Administration from Queen's University (Kingston, Ontario), and has completed the Executive Education program at Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government (Cambridge, Mass.). David is married and has two sons.

NOTES TO PRINCIPLE ONE:

Beliefs Drive Effective Leadership

(1-1) Here is what Isadore Sharp had to say on this matter: *“I told our managers, our employees may have to stretch a bit, accept risk, and learn from mistakes. But if we believe in them, they will believe in themselves, be happier and more productive, and therefore more successful.”* (Isadore Sharp with Alan Phillips. *Four Seasons: The Story of a Business Philosophy*. Penguin Group. 2010. Page 100).

(1-2) In any part of life, a particular belief can create barriers to achieving goals. One of the more well-known examples of this is the story of the 4-minute mile. For years people believed that it was impossible to run a mile in less than 4 minutes. Athletes, therefore, never set their goal below 4 minutes. In 1954, an athlete named Roger Bannister changed this belief by successfully breaking the 4-minute record, inspiring 37 runners within one year to break the record. They now believed it could be done. (The Four-Minute Mile, Fiftieth-Anniversary Edition. May 2004. Roger Bannister Biography)

(1-3) The Influence of Beliefs on Behaviour Is Complex. Predicting and influencing how a person will act in a given situation cannot always be accomplished by simply knowing and influencing their beliefs. With all of the power and promise that working with beliefs offers, the relationship between beliefs and behaviour is not a simple one. Any particular behaviour in any particular moment might be influenced by beliefs, motivations, and feelings, as well as by internal and external opportunities and constraints. As well, beliefs themselves can be influenced by many of the things that they in turn influence. But while beliefs may not always be the only influence on how we feel and act as people and as leaders, they are likely to be the best entry point for leaders. Beliefs are often what leaders can most easily influence. So what effective leaders must seek to do is to understand when and how beliefs are important.

There are times when we may feel something and then develop a belief in order to explain that feeling, or behave in a certain way and then develop a belief to explain our actions to ourselves and others. We might, for example, feel and act as if we are engaged in our work. In an effort to explain this feeling when asked, we might come to the conclusion, or the belief, that it is because our boss empowers us, we find our work interesting, or we believe we are making a difference. Yet prior to being asked, these beliefs were not “top of mind.” We simply felt and acted as if we were engaged.

There can be times when a leader takes an action and then creates beliefs to justify or explain their behaviour. It could be, for example, that a demonstration of incompetence causes a leader to become critical and demanding of an employee in front of others. Perhaps the leader simply could not control his or her frustration and anger in the moment. While regretting the action, the leader may develop the belief that such an outburst was justifiable in the moment, given the gravity of the employee’s performance. Should they see an improvement in the employee’s performance, they might even develop a belief that there was some value in that outburst.

A general belief may influence a specific belief. If an employee believes that a colleague has little respect for the time of others, that colleague’s lateness to a meeting is likely to be believed to be a demonstration of disrespect for everyone else’s time as opposed to being driven by a need to attend to an important client matter. If a leader believes that the new generation of employees is generally disloyal, they are likely to believe that the departure of an employee to take a more senior role in another organization is an example of disloyalty as opposed to an understandable move to advance his or her career.

More than one belief might impact a specific behaviour. We might believe in the value of being considerate to others but not believe that a particular colleague deserves our consideration. Our belief that the world is a competitive place may block our ability to fully embrace a belief in the

value of teamwork. Our belief that the personal risk is too great may block our ability to embrace a change that we believe is good and should be undertaken. We might believe that we should take the lead on a project but that others will not accept us as the leader, so we do not step up to the plate even though we think we should. We might believe that a particular course of action is the best but also believe that we will not be given the autonomy to head in that direction, so we do not undertake the initiative.

Beliefs are themselves influenced. A belief can influence what you think about a situation but what you think about a situation can also influence what you believe. Take for example, “I think she lied so I believe she may be untrustworthy” versus “I believe she is untrustworthy so I think she may be lying.” A belief can influence what you want to do but what you want to do can also influence what you believe. If you are motivated to win, for example, you may believe you must win to be successful. However, if you believe you must win to be successful, you will be motivated to win. A belief can influence your behaviour but your behaviour can influence what you believe. If you listen and learn something you did not know, for example, you may begin to believe you should listen more. On the other hand, if you believe you should listen more, you may listen and begin to learn something new. If you believe you should exercise, you are more likely to do so. If you get some exercise, and feel better, you may begin to believe you should exercise. Finally, beliefs can influence emotions but emotions can also influence beliefs. Consider, for example, the sentiment “I feel hurt, so I believe his behaviour was hurtful.”

(1-4) Actions that would otherwise result from beliefs may be inhibited by internal opportunities and constraints such as natural abilities and emotional resilience. They may also be inhibited by external opportunities and constraints including such factors as resources and power.

Internal Factors. For a belief to translate into behaviour, a person must have the internal resources to be able to act. These include skills which are possible to enhance given the natural talent upon which they rest, as well as natural talents which, themselves, are for all intents and purposes, static and not possible to develop. With respect to skills that are possible to develop, a person may believe that he or she can be an effective and credible leader but not have the skills to delegate and empower effectively, be appropriately assertive, resolve conflict, negotiate, plan strategically, or budget effectively. There are many effective techniques to enhance skills such as these, and unless an individual has strong personality- or intellectually-based limitations, these techniques will be successful. With respect to natural talents, a person may believe that he or she can be an effective and credible leader but not have the intellectual ability to be successful. For example, they may not have the natural numerical talent to understand financial statements or effectively undertake financial planning and budgeting tasks, sufficient memory to handle important details or to be consistent as a leader, or sufficient ability to grasp the issues, solve problems, and make good decisions. As well, a person may believe he or she can be an effective and credible leader but not have the focus and self-control to remain consistent in decisions and directions, to force themselves to do those things that are necessary as a leader, or to learn the skills they need to be effective. Further, a person may believe that he or she can be an effective and credible leader but not have the energy and resilience to work long days and weekends, keep going in the face of hardship, or travel through time zones and remain alert and effective.

External Factors. A person may believe in himself or herself as a leader or in a direction to be taken, but they may not be able to act on these beliefs because they are blocked by external factors such as a lack of opportunity, a lack of resources, a lack of power, or a lack of perceived credibility. For example, a person might believe they can and should be leading but there are no leadership positions open in the organization, they are not given the opportunities to lead that come up, and no other companies are hiring at the

required level. A person might believe that they must secure an MBA in order to learn what they need to learn and be credible as a leader, but do not have the time or the financial resources to fund their education. A person might believe that the best course of action is to lower prices and build market share but not have the power to set that direction.

(1-5) Haering and Kiesel, 2012; McCaffrey, 2011.

NOTES TO PRINCIPLE TWO:

Successful Leaders Believe In Themselves

(2-1) Sir Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin Empire, faced challenges in high school. He also experienced numerous failed business attempts in his early years, yet never gave up or lost his vision to leave a legacy by creating one of the most respected companies in the world.

(2-2) Many years ago I came to believe that successful leaders must have a reason to lead. The challenges, personal risks, and sheer amount of work involved in a leadership role require that the motivation to lead be strong. Without that motivation, or without that “psychological payoff,” it is difficult to face the challenges or handle the pressure of a leadership role. Other professionals have also noted this fact (Richard A. Davis, 2010).

(2-3) Many people prefer roles that do not involve leading. Sometimes this is because they are motivated by gaining technical expertise, creating products, or delivering services. At other times this is because they are motivated to avoid activities that they find less comfortable, such as taking on more responsibility and personal risk or becoming more visible and open to potential criticism. But for those who do want to lead, belief in one’s ability and right to lead is a necessary but not sufficient condition for effective leadership. While a person may want to lead, have a reason to lead, and believe that they can lead, there is no guarantee that they will have the opportunity to be a leader or, if they do, that they will be an effective leader. They may be prone to overestimating their ability, they may encounter

unsolvable problems, and there may be external constraints that they cannot overcome.

A Necessary Condition. Consider the following comments: “I cannot imagine a leader who is not driven to lead because of his or her beliefs.” (David Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Peel); “If you have not touched someone, no one will be talking about you when you are gone.” (Herb Singer, Founder and President, Discount Car & Truck Rentals); “All the leader types we are familiar with from politics and management – the showy ones, the shady ones, the greedy ones, the magnanimous ones – have a walk-on part in the script of evolutionary leadership theory. The one thing that connects these types is that they possess a basic desire to lead. Perhaps more importantly, the one thing that unites their subordinates is that they possess a basic desire to be led.” (Van Vugt and Ahuja. Selected. Random House Canada. 2011. Page 21-22).

It is possible that a professional can be promoted to a leadership role even though they do not personally believe that they have the skills to be there. This happens in the classic case of the best salesperson becoming the sales manager, whether or not it is their first choice and regardless of whether they have the required leadership and managerial skills. Should this happen, unless the leader develops belief in themselves fairly quickly, they are not likely to have the confidence, credibility, or stamina to be effective over time. Their performance may not be so poor to result in a decision that they must leave the role, but those around them are unlikely to see them as effective leaders, and organizational performance is likely to fall short of potential.

A Necessary but Insufficient Condition. The fact that potential leaders want to lead, have a reason to lead, and believe that they can lead, does not necessarily mean that there will be opportunities for them to lead or that they will be good leaders.

There are also a number of ways in which a leader's beliefs may be unfounded. Many very public examples exist of those who have aspired to leadership, secured a leadership role, and not been successful due to factors such

as skill, circumstance, or credibility. (See Harvard Business <http://hbr.org/2009/02/why-good-leaders-make-bad-decisions>, Campbell, Whitehead, and Finkelstein, which offers examples of important judgments made by intelligent and responsible leaders who had great intentions that led to disastrous results. See also Nagy-Smith, “What was Polaroid Thinking?” Behavioural Research. Yale School of Management. Reported in Yale Insights. 2009).

A person may believe that they have the intellectual capacity to handle a leadership role when they simply do not, or perhaps simply do not in the eyes of those whom they would lead and those who would be their colleagues. Perhaps they are perceived by others to be slow to pick up new concepts, understand issues, and make effective decisions. As well, a person may believe that they have sufficient experience and skill to take on a higher-level role when they simply do not. Or perhaps they believe that they have the stamina to lead in an international role but cannot function effectively after flying through numerous time zones.

Perhaps a leader has a correct belief that their abilities and traits often work well in leadership roles, but possess these traits so strongly that those very traits become weaknesses. For example, their confidence may move past reason and lead them to have a grandiose sense of their ability, or of what can be achieved with the available resources. Or their assertiveness might move past the productive level to become dominating and this may lead to a situation where capable people do not want to work with them. Perhaps their desire to remain in control is so strong that they cannot let the organization develop capability below them because they cannot truly delegate to and empower others. In yet other instances, a person may have a leadership philosophy that overemphasizes some aspects of leadership at the expense of others. For example, they may have a relaxed style that leads them to emphasize empowerment but not to drive their people to the extent that is necessary in order to achieve results. Or they may emphasize a “servant

leader” philosophy, be supportive by nature, and respond to the needs of others to the extent that they have difficulty managing priorities and time.

(2-4) Here is a comment from Sir Richard Branson on the topic of leaders believing in themselves: “Although I listen carefully to everyone, I make up my own mind and just do it. I believe in myself and in my goals”

– Sir Richard Branson. (Screw It, Let’s Do It. Lessons in Life and Business. Virgin Books. 2009. Page 83).

(2-5) “You can create a culture that welcomes risk-taking by freely admitting your mistakes and talking about what you’ve learned from them.” (Jack Welch with Suzy Welch. Winning. Harper Collins Publishers Inc. 2005. Page 76).

(2-6) Here is what Donald J. Trump has said about hard work: “If you like to work hard, you will attract people with the same ethic. The people who work with me enjoy the daily challenges and set their own standards to meet those challenges. Their pattern of thinking matches mine – how do we accomplish more? How do we get to where we want to go? It’s a combination of vision, courage, and discipline to realize that the possibilities are always there.”

(Donald Trump with Meredith McIver. Think Like a Champion. Vanguard Press. 2009. Page 151). Here is what Ted Rogers has to say about hard work: “If my life has a lesson for others, I think it is that everyone has a shot. Don’t follow a dream – live it. No matter what you want, take your best shot. Be passionate and work hard, maybe harder than you ever dreamt, but the opportunity is there.” (Ted Rogers with Robert Brehl. Relentless. The True Story of the Man Behind Rogers Communications. Harper Collins Publishers Ltd. 2008. Page 249). Here is what Sir Richard Branson has to say about hard work: “If you look ahead to the end, and all the miles in between, with all the dangers you might face, you might never take that first step. Whatever it is you want to achieve in life, if you don’t make the effort, you won’t reach your goal.” (Sir Richard Branson. Screw It, Let’s Do it. Lessons in Life and Business. Virgin Books. 2009. Preface xiii). On the related matter of passion, General Rick Hillier notes: “I still believe and simply recommend that if you cannot be passionate about what you do every day, your lack of passion will define you

and you will not succeed.” (General Rick Hillier. *Leadership*. Harper Collins Publishers Ltd. 2010. Page 90).

(2-7) Richard Branson makes the following comments about challenge: “For me, there are two types of challenge. One is to do the best I can at work and home. The other is to seek adventure. I try to do both. I try to stretch myself to the limit. I am driven and I love the challenge of looking for new things and new ideas.” (Richard Branson. *Screw It, Let’s Do It. Lessons in Life and Business*. Virgin Books. 2009. Page 67).

NOTES TO PRINCIPLE THREE:

Successful Leaders Inspire Belief

(3-1) The work of Shealy and his colleagues draws upon the Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory, or BEVI, and is informed by a two-year job analysis of international leaders and leadership (Dyjak-LeBlanc, Brewster, Grande, White, & Shullman, in press; Shealy, in press).

(3-2) For example, Jack Welch believes that leadership can be found in anyone as long as they contribute, come up with good ideas and can energize, excite, and inspire rather than enervate, depress, and control. Jack Welch does not like the term ‘manage’. To him, it conjures up negative images, such as ‘keeping people in the dark’ and ‘controlling and stifling people’. (Jack Welch with Suzy Welch. *Winning*. Harper Collins Publishers Inc. 2005).

(3-3) Consider the words of General Rick Hillier: “People are the basic building blocks of everything you do as a leader, and the most basic element of leadership is to treat people with respect. Never demean, insult, or belittle your people, even in jest. Instead, build up their pride by showing them that each and every one of them is a respected, mature, and responsible adult. That respect will be returned to you many times over, especially if your people feel they are part of a powerful team.” (General Rick Hillier. *Leadership*. Harper Collins Publishers Ltd. 2010. Page 37).

(3-4) Within this context, Mark Van Vugt and Anjana Ahuja review existing research and find that: “Cultures and societies all over the world possess a remarkably consistent idea of the qualities they covet in a leader, which suggests to us that a universal concept of leadership is etched deeply in the human psyche, along with other universal human capacities such as language.” (Van Vugt, M. & Ahuja, A. *Naturally Selected: The Evolutionary Science of Leadership*. Random House Canada. 2011. Page 7).

(3-5) In more hierarchical cultures, social status and rank are somewhat fixed at birth and family status plays a central role in what one can expect to be able to do and to achieve across their lifetime. In more egalitarian societies, there is an intentional blurring of status and individuals are viewed as equal regardless of the work that they do. (Solomon and Schell. *Managing Across Cultures: The Seven Keys to Doing Business with a Global Mindset*. McGraw-Hill, 2009).

(3-6) Richard L. Daft, *Understanding the Theory and Design of Organizations*, first edition 2007, ISBN 0-324-42271-7. Each stage of the Richard Daft model is characterized by specific features and challenges. The model begins with an Entrepreneurial stage wherein the crisis to be overcome is a need for leadership. Stage two is the Collectivity stage wherein the challenge to be faced is a need for delegation. Stage three is the Formalization stage wherein the key issue is to rationalize the work being done and create mature business processes necessary for effective and efficient administration. In the fourth and final stage, the Elaboration stage, the need is for revitalization.

NOTES TO PRINCIPLE FOUR:

Leadership Credibility is Built on Belief

(4-1) Consider the words of Isadore Sharp: “The fastest way for management to destroy its credibility is to say employees come first and be seen as putting them last.” (Isadore Sharp with Alan Phillips. *Four Seasons: The Story of a Business Philosophy*. Penguin Group. 2010. Page 106).

(4-2) Consider the words of Isadore Sharp: “Values, as I saw it, were a company’s psychic core. Without values in common, we couldn’t develop company-wide trust. And without trust, we couldn’t communicate. We wouldn’t be believable.” (Isadore Sharp with Alan Phillips. *Four Seasons: The Story of a Business Philosophy*. Penguin Group. 2010. Page 103).

(4-3) Leaders may not have the capacity to lead at every level. Some are most comfortable in a narrow field. Some will be best at leading a team, some will be best at leading a division, and some will be best at leading other senior leaders. Some can work with higher levels of complexity than others and are therefore able to handle higher-level roles and to maintain credibility in those roles (Elliott Jaques, Stephen Clements, and Ronnie Lessem. *Executive Leadership: A Practical Guide to Managing Complexity*. 1994). So what this means is that a leader can be credible at one level of an organization but not at other levels. They may have the capability to be effective as a manager but not as a director, as a director but not as a vice president, or as a vice president but not as a CEO.

(4-4) Here is what the authors of *Managing by Values* have to say: “The single most critical success factor for Managing by Values is congruence between what corporate leaders say they believe and what their actions and decisions communicate they believe, in both the short and long term.” (Simon Dolan, Salvador Garcia and Bonnie Richley. *Managing by Values*. Palgrave Macmillan. New York. 2006. Page 19). General Rick Hillier notes: “Honest people expect to be believed. They have strong influence and can have a powerful impact merely because of the moral way they behave. They know that others believe them by default. Similarly, great leaders hold to the steadfast belief that their credibility is crucial to their ability to lead. Building trust is at the center of their every thought and action, and directly enables them to achieve their goals. Without credibility, they simply are not effective.” (General Rick Hillier. *Leadership*. Harper Collins Publishers Ltd. 2010. Page 257).

(4-5) According to Jack Welch, “Anyone can manage for the short term – just keep squeezing the lemon. Anyone can manage for the long term – just keep dreaming. You were made a leader because someone believed you could squeeze and dream at the same time. They saw in you a person with enough insight, experience, and rigor to balance the conflicting demands of short- and long-term results.” (Jack Welch with Suzy Welch. *Winning*. Harper Collins Publishers Inc. 2005. Page 64).

NOTES TO PRINCIPLE FIVE:

Leadership Development is Enabled by Belief

(5-1) A belief may be more difficult to change in one person than in another person for several reasons. First, the same belief may or may not be tied to identity. By identity, we mean a person’s core beliefs about themselves such as that they are honest or savvy, superior or inferior, or in control of what happens to them or not. Consider the example of change initiatives that failed because leaders did not involve key stakeholders. It may simply be that those leaders did not anticipate or believe that involving key stakeholders in order to garner their support is likely to be critical to the success of change initiatives. Once those leaders come to understand why doing so is important, perhaps through reading, coaching, or training in the change management process, they can easily develop the belief that it is important to involve stakeholders and are likely to do so from that point on. However, if the reason that those leaders did not involve stakeholders is linked to their personalities, it may be very difficult to bring them to believe that involving stakeholders is a good idea. Perhaps they have a strong need to be in control and they seek to manage information so that they can remain independent. Perhaps they have a strong fear of failing and of being vulnerable due to misguided pressure from stakeholders. So the same belief may be a core part of one person’s personality and identity or be a simple thought held with minimal conviction by another person.

Second, a belief may be more difficult to change in one person than in another person due to different levels of experience and knowledge. We can easily

see why newer leaders may be more impressionable than more experienced leaders. Newer leaders have not had a great deal of experience that supports their leadership beliefs. In essence, many of their beliefs are still being held more or less as hypotheses that can be easily changed with information. Take, for example, the matter of believing that people will be proactive in the completion of work. When many leaders start out in their careers, they have a tendency to believe that others have much the same work ethic and motivations that they do. They are likely to believe that, if someone is assigned a task, they will complete it well and on time. They may also believe that, if a person runs into difficulty, they will seek help. In short, they are likely to believe that there is little need to check in on what is being done. With experience, however, leaders will learn that such a belief is not always well-founded. They will learn to believe that different people must be managed differently. Any experienced leader is likely to have strong convictions in this regard, and well-respected leadership models, such as the Situational Leadership Model (Blanchard, 1980; Hersey, 1985), are designed to teach leaders how to manage different people in different ways.

Third, a belief may be more difficult to change in one person than in another simply because some people are by nature more open to new experience than others. In his classic book, *The Open and Closed Mind: Investigations into the Nature of Belief Systems and Personality Systems*, New York: Basic Books, 1960, Milton Rokeach set out characteristics of people who were more or less open to learning, change, and influence. Rokeach devoted his career to studying the organization of belief systems and the general aspects of intellectual flexibility. Since then, much research has validated his belief that some people are by nature more open to learning and to changing beliefs than are others. This does not mean that leaders and leadership development specialists who seek to develop others must become experts at assessing the subtle personality traits of those who are by nature resistant to new ideas. Those for whom this is a significant issue tend to become obvious through their tendencies to be defensive, less flexible, and resistant to new ideas.

People may also vary in their ability to hold complex beliefs that require a capacity to go beyond that which is binary or black-and-white. The work of Elliott Jaques on cognitive complexity (Elliott Jaques, Stephen Clements, Ronnie Lessem, 1994) presents a theory that addresses a leader's ability to handle different levels of work based on their ability to work with differing levels of concepts and to use different methods of processing those concepts. Those with higher levels of cognitive complexity are able to understand, integrate, and work with more complex and multifaceted information. Those with a lower level of cognitive complexity than is required to address the issues at hand will not be effective doing so. Beliefs that require the ability to integrate alternatives and to use if-then scenarios will be difficult to adopt for those who process issues in black-and-white terms. For example, if a leader's level of cognitive complexity only enables them to see people as highly motivated or not motivated, they will not be able to adopt the belief that motivation levels may depend on the nature of the work being done, the context in which it is being done, or the manner in which it is being done. Without that belief, they will not seek to understand the potential reasons for lower levels of motivation or be able to manage people differently in order to bring out the best in them. As a result, they may never move past the supervisory level of leadership.

Beliefs you Cannot Realistically Expect to Change. While it would be helpful if we could change all beliefs that get in the way of being more effective people, professionals, and leaders, this is simply not the case. It isn't even easy to identify some of the beliefs that drive our behaviour, let alone change them. Those beliefs that form our personalities, for example, tend to be ones that we take as truths. We do not even tend to notice them much of the time.

Beliefs Inconsistent with Identity are Difficult to Instill. For practical purposes, those beliefs that are tied to a leader's identity cannot be changed with a reasonable amount of effort. There are two general types of identity-based beliefs: personality-based beliefs, and; culturally-based beliefs. Personality-based identity beliefs are those that define a person as different from other people within a given culture. Culturally-based identity beliefs are those that tend to be held by people who share a socio-cultural context.

As an example of personality-based identity beliefs, we can look at the case where a leader's identity is that of a savvy person who obtains what they want by withholding information, providing misinformation, and staying in control. In this case, the needs of their personality, or life strategy, are likely to prevent them from benefiting from suggestions that they might productively collaborate. I have worked with many frustrated leaders who have attempted to counsel those who hold these beliefs to understand that they will receive more from others if they fully collaborate and act as true team players. But people who share this personality style and identity typically believe that there are those who “get it” and those who do not, and that it is obvious that their boss does not. They tend to believe that, while giving the appearance of honesty may be a good life strategy, true honesty and true collaboration are poor life strategies. They believe that those who promote honesty and collaboration are misguided and that they will fall behind in life and leadership. They believe that such people simply set themselves up for failure by distracting themselves from their own immediate objectives and by affording others the opportunity to take advantage of them.

Culturally-based identity beliefs are strongly embedded in our identities through social and faith-based influences. Some theorists believe that there may even be an inherited aspect to cultural beliefs (C.G. Jung, 1984; Ann S. Tsui and K. Xin, 2006). By way of example, in many Eastern cultures it is considered to be disrespectful to be assertive with an individual who is older or in a higher role, while in Western cultures, one would not only be entitled but also expected to be assertive as a function of the need at hand. As well, in some Eastern cultures, one would not think of delegating to an individual who is “older” even if they were a direct report and in a less senior role. In Western cultures, this would be an irrelevant consideration apart from some potential for social awkwardness (D. Kang, 2009). A Western leader would, quite frankly, be expected to “get over it.” We can easily see that beliefs would have to change if a leader from an Eastern cultural background were to adopt modern Western approaches involving assertiveness and delegation.

Even if the individual is outside their homeland, a belief such as this may be difficult to change because it is tied to societal beliefs that have formed part of the person's cultural identity.

Beliefs Inconsistent with Personality Traits Are Difficult to Instill. Natural tendencies and inclinations that are based in our personalities are more difficult to change. Tendencies that form our personalities include motivations, ingrained patterns of behaviour, and natural reactions or impulses.

A considerable amount of research suggests that many of these have strong genetic underpinnings (Carol Dweck, 2008). When we attempt to instill beliefs and related behaviours that do not fit with our natural personalities, motivations, and impulses, things are not likely to go smoothly. Examples would be successfully seeking to encourage a natural talker to listen, a cautious person to take a risk, a sensitive person to not take issues personally, a passive person to be assertive, or a naturally defensive person to not come out fighting in the face of conflict. A natural tendency among many leaders that often proves difficult to change is that of being prone to becoming frustrated and angry in the face of roadblocks. A leader might, for example, be prone to yelling at employees or colleagues whom they perceive to have let them down. They can be taught that it is not constructive to do so, and even though they may believe that it is not constructive, they may not be able to stop themselves simply because they cannot control their natural impulse to become angry.

(5-2) An example of inferential bias can be seen in an employee who believes that people will take it easy if they are not watched closely. That employee is likely to believe that their boss is watching them closely for that reason. However, it may well be that the boss is simply not sure that the employee can handle a task without a guiding hand. Alternatively, if the boss is attempting to delegate as much as possible and to empower staff, that same employee might believe that the boss is delegating all the work in order to be able to work less themselves.

(5-3) This, of course, assumes that they believed that the assessment was confidential and completed it honestly. Note that *multi-rater feedback instruments* do not reveal the operating beliefs that people hold about leadership and leading, about people and what motivates them, or about why people do what they do. Note also that sometimes a person may not want others to know what they believe. Perhaps, for example, a leader does not want to discourage employees by openly sharing their beliefs about the long-term prospects for the company until they have a plan to make those prospects more encouraging.

(5-4) But they also need to remember that those who gave them feedback may have been generous because they believed that the truth might not be well received.

(5-5) As another example, a leader who is highly confident is likely to believe that they possess superior talent and that they are entitled to move up to more senior levels of leadership, perhaps even before they are sufficiently experienced and skilled. Such a leader is likely to believe that they are entitled to have the “floor” when interacting with their colleagues in meetings. They are also likely to believe that, by virtue of who they are, they deserve the respect and admiration of those who work for them. Delegation is likely to come easily to them because they believe that others should be handling the details while they focus on the higher-level aspects of leadership. When a mistake is made, they are not likely to become derailed. They are likely to believe that they did as well as anyone could, if not better.

In addition to core personality, many *individual personality traits* are a direct function of beliefs. Consider the example of internal and external locus of control, or “personal agency.” Here, we are concerned about whether a leader believes that they can control events or that they must, for the most part, respond to them. And consider the interplay of personality traits and values. Values in many ways reflect what a leader believes to be important. If a leader believes that it is important to win, and values winning, we will see them to have competitive personality traits. If they believe that it is

important to be in charge, we will see them to have dominant personality traits. If they believe that it is important to tell what they believe to be the truth as opposed to what may be acceptable to others, we will see them to be outspoken and, perhaps, irreverent.

(5-6) The main difficulty with traditional interviewing techniques is that the leader's responses may reflect what they believe they should say as opposed to what they actually believe. It is, in part, this shortcoming of standard interviews that has led people to utilize behavioural interviews over the last two decades. The belief here is that it is more difficult to positively reconstruct one's recollection of real events that have occurred than it is to positively discuss what one would do now or in the future. However, it is just as likely that a smart leader is capable of reconstructing historical events as effectively as they are capable of constructing future scenarios. This is especially true when they have been trained to do so, as so many have now been. So, whether using behavioural interviews or other types of traditional interviews, the interviewer must always be aware that they cannot simply infer actual beliefs from stated beliefs, particularly when the task at hand may have implications for the career of the leader in question.

Belief-Based Interview Assessment methods include the following:

Belief-Based Historical Interviews. Beliefs can be directly assessed in a historically-oriented interview format. Here, the interviewer asks questions such as: "What did you believe about the situation that led you to initiate an internal audit?"; "What did you believe was motivating the colleague who seemed to be attempting to undermine your initiative?"; and; "What do you believe are the reasons that you were so successful in bringing about this change in strategic direction?".

Belief-Based Current State Interviews. Leadership beliefs can be directly assessed in a current belief interview format where a leader is simply asked about their current beliefs in relation to aspects of leading. Here, the

interviewer asks questions such as: “What do you believe is the best way to manage resistance to organizational change?”; “What do you believe are the essential elements of a great vision?”; “What do you believe is the best way to create a strategy?”; “What do you believe is the best way to keep an organizational culture strong?”, and; “What do you believe are the key leadership behaviours that foster high levels of employee engagement?”.

Belief-Based Future-Oriented Interviews. Beliefs can also be assessed in a future-oriented belief-based interview format. Here, a leader is asked about what they believe the best way to handle a series of upcoming challenges would be. Examples are: “What do you believe is the best way to act in your first ninety days in this new role?”; “How do you believe an employee who was seeking your job should be managed?”, and; “What do you believe is the best way to go about assessing and developing your new leadership team?”.

Belief-Based Behavioural Interviews. Behavioural interviews focus on the actual behaviours that leaders demonstrated while addressing past challenges. The key feature of a belief-based behavioural interview is that it places emphasis on beliefs in addition to the more traditional emphasis on behaviours. The most effective behavioural interviewers were always doing this but many were not. So when you ask a leader to tell you about a time when they had a great success or a difficult business challenge and how they handled it, be sure to ask them what they believed. Ask them what they believed about the beliefs of others, what they themselves believed, and how the experience changed their beliefs.

(5-7) Shealy and his colleagues developed the EI Leadership Model which draws upon the Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory, or BEVI, and is a derivative of a two year job analysis of international leaders and leadership (Dyjak-LeBlanc, Brewster, Grande, White, & Shullman, in press; Shealy, in press). Through individual and group reports, the EI model and BEVI method allow for comprehensive assessment of the beliefs and values of leaders and those being led, as well as of the organization as a whole. Among other

outcomes, such information makes it possible to identify areas of relative belief/value alignment and misalignment within the organization, facilitate processes of leadership growth and development, and track processes of change over time.

(5-8) Belief-Based Surveys and Focus Groups can be used to assess key aspects of organizations as well as leadership impact in important areas of employee morale and engagement. Belief-Based Surveys and Focus Groups can also be used to assess beliefs about specific organizational initiatives including change processes. Information derived from Belief-Based Surveys and Focus Groups can inform and better enable leaders to refine their approach to leading within the context of prevailing beliefs. In other words, they can provide information that helps leaders impact outcomes more quickly, more effectively, and with more lasting impact.

(5-9) Belief-Based Reflection. One of the many positive aspects of working with beliefs is that a leader can often successfully develop their beliefs through the simple art of Belief-Based Reflection. Here, a leader can ask himself or herself about the beliefs they hold that might get in the way of such actions as taking leadership risks, delegating work, involving stakeholders, or dealing with performance issues. They can research and reflect on alternative beliefs that would facilitate stronger performance in these areas. For example, a leader who is prone to taking issues personally and responding defensively to the actions of others can learn a great deal through reflection once they learn and come to believe that the actions of others, while impacting them, are often not directed at them. If they are coached to understand that others frequently act out of their own needs in ways that have unintended consequences, they can begin to reflect on the actions of others and their beliefs about the intentions behind those actions in a way that brings about new beliefs and reactions.

In addition to yielding information for others who may be seeking to mentor or coach a leader, *feedback questionnaires can provide the opportunity for a leader to reflect on* and better understand why they and others do what they do. They can help leaders, not only identify their beliefs, but also consolidate those beliefs. Further, feedback questionnaires can provide a basis for behavioural change and leadership development by identifying those beliefs that may inhibit a person's progress toward their personal and leadership goals.

(5-10) Belief-Based Reading. Included here are classics such as: *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey, 1989; *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie, 1936, and; *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peale, 1952. Reading does not always change beliefs or help to develop new skills. By way of example, reading about refining personal beliefs that promote a positive orientation and a success-oriented attitude can be very helpful. Doing so can help leaders capitalize on and develop existing strengths. Yet, should a person's core inclination be to view events and the future in negative terms, reading about developing a positive attitude will not be a sufficient method to fully develop related beliefs and skills.

(5-11) Belief-Based Experience. Some people learn more from their experience than do others. This is sometimes determined by whether they hold beliefs that place a high value on learning. How much a person learns in a given situation can also be influenced by past experiences. For example, during organizational change, individuals often accept or resist a new situation because of beliefs driven by past experiences. If an individual has experienced past change efforts that were well-managed and that made it easier for them to perform tasks, they will be more likely to believe that change is not to be feared, as well as more ready to accept new changes and

to learn any required new skills. On the other hand, an individual who has previously experienced the stress and complications of a major change that failed, may well be fearful and resistant to taking steps that would enable them to have new experiences and to learn new skills.

(5-12) In *Belief-Based Mentoring*, focus is on the development of productive beliefs that influence general performance and career progression. The mentor exercises his or her ability to lead and inspire the learner to gain new insights and beliefs about what generally works best in business, as well as in their unique organization. The mentor acts as a “trusted advisor” who can offer an objective view and can prompt a leader to self-assess and uncover beliefs that may be limiting their performance.

(5-13) *Belief-Based Identity and Personality Counselling* is a highly specialized area, even within the broader field of psychology, much like the specialty fields within the areas of business, law, and accounting. Executives who work as coaches and mentors cannot be expected to offer this type of assistance given the time they have available and the fact that their expertise is quite different than that of a belief-based psychologist. External business coaches who have not been appropriately trained can also not be expected to effectively provide belief-based counselling.

Belief “Shaping” may be possible even when change is not. While significant change cannot be expected when it comes to core personality traits and identity-based beliefs, one can often shape and channel the impact of those beliefs. A leadership coach is not likely to be successful at attempting to have someone who believes that they are superior and entitled to what they want pay more attention to the rights and needs of others, or to cooperate and to show real concern for others. However, they might be able to lead them to believe that they can get more of what they think they are entitled to if they consider others, and this may influence their behaviour. Similarly, a leadership coach is not likely to easily, if ever, convince a leader who believes that they have to show people they are a force to be contended with to let

a perceived slight go unaddressed. However, they might be able to lead the person to believe that a more strategic approach would be in their best interest. They might, for example, be successful in encouraging the leader to adopt the belief that it makes sense to lose a battle in order to win a war, and this may change their behaviour in some instances. As well, while a leadership coach is not likely to be able to easily encourage a person who sees themselves as balanced and as having life in perspective to work harder to meet a deadline, they may well be able to encourage them to believe that it is worth working harder to meet a deadline in return for additional time off.

The Expression of Personality-Based Beliefs can be changed. While you cannot realistically hope to change personality-based beliefs, you can sometimes change the expression of those beliefs. Even in the most resistant of cases it is typically possible to change some beliefs and behaviours “in and around” core personality and natural impulses. These are beliefs that enable a leader to act differently but in a manner that is consistent with their motivations, personality traits, and natural tendencies. For example, while a leader whose core motivation is to achieve is not likely to stop wanting to achieve, and may be fearing retirement, a leadership coach may be able to influence their beliefs about what achievement is and about what they want to achieve. Within this context, those leaders who seek to achieve during their business lives typically continue to achieve in some manner when they retire. They may achieve through working on boards, improving their golf game, starting a small business, or running a marathon. But they will still want to achieve. For them, the absence of achievement takes the meaning and fun out of life.

Aspects of Identity-Related Beliefs can be influenced. While a leader’s core identity will not change, some beliefs about their identity can change. For example, a leader might start out in life seeing themselves as a completely honest person. One day they might receive feedback from someone whom they have hurt through their honest feedback that their honesty lacks compassion. Depending on what else the leader believes about himself or herself, their self-concept may change. If they also see themselves as a good

person, for example, their self-concept, their identity, might change to become more complex. The leader might begin to believe something such as “Because I am a good person, I temper my honesty with compassion.” Their behaviour may change in that they may become more sensitive in what they say, how they say it, and when they say it. If, on the other hand, the leader sees himself or herself as an objective person and believes that the best contribution in life is to be neither compassionate nor complimentary but correct, their constructive criticism is not likely to be tempered.

You Can Change the Expression of Natural Talents. Even in the case of intellectual capability, a natural talent that is generally recognized as fixed (Elliott Jaques, Stephen Clements, Ronnie Lessem, 1994; Jay Niblick, 2009), the expression and impact of the natural talent can be influenced. While a leader, for example, cannot significantly change their level of intelligence, they can develop new beliefs about how to solve problems, such as who to involve in the process and how to make decisions. Because of this, they can, in fact, become better at solving problems.

(5-14) Designing and Implementing a Belief-Based Leadership Development Plan. Like any good plan, a Belief-Based Leadership Development Plan must be carefully prioritized. For the most part, professionals and leaders can always benefit from further developing beliefs in the personal, interpersonal, and technical skill realms. It is difficult to imagine a person who could not develop a better understanding of themselves and others, or become even more effective at negotiating, resolving conflicts, or managing change. So careful prioritizing is essential. Priorities might be based on immediate work-related needs, significant skill or performance shortfalls, or a proven potential to move to the next level of leadership given further skill development. What is essential is that the individual and their superiors agree on the areas for development, the approach to be undertaken, and the investment that will be required.

A professional development plan must be tailored to the context and the available resources. Not infrequently, a process of internal coaching would be ideal for a leader's development, but internal coaches with the required skill sets may not be readily available. This is particularly true in the case of belief-based development because there are so few executives at this point who are skilled in the perspective or the methodology. The next best solution might well be external coaching, but here, considerable financial resources will be required to enlist the services of an effective external coach. Should these resources not be available, the best course of action would be skill-based training from a well-qualified trainer.

Using specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (SMART) goals will be of value in any plan, as will monitoring progress and remaining flexible. One may not always succeed at changing beliefs and behaviour as quickly as they might like to, or in the manner they first envisioned. For example, a development plan may start out with skill training targeting enhanced skills at delegating and empowering staff. A multi-rater feedback survey may then indicate that the training has not been effective. Here, one can be relatively certain that the beliefs essential to develop new skills and behaviours in these areas have not emerged, or that competing beliefs are inhibiting their impact. As a result, the development plan must be refined and must become better informed and personalized through individual assessment and coaching.

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