Leveraging Leadership Across Generations

Barry Z. Posner
The Leadership Challenge Forum II
August 6, 2009
Chicago
Leadership for the young: What does that mean?

Barry Z. Posner, Ph.D.
The Leadership Challenge Forum I
August 9, 2008 Denver
“Kids.

I don’t know what’s wrong with these kids today.

Why can’t they be like we were,

Perfect in every way?

What’s the matter with kids today?”
“Every generation has wondered and worried about whether or not the next generation will be ready and able to handle the demands, challenges, and opportunities they will be leaving behind.”
“The young do not know enough to be prudent, and therefore they attempt the impossible, and achieve it, generation after generation.”
“Is there a difference between youth and adult leadership?

There is certainly a difference between the literature focused on adult leadership and the literature focused on youth leadership.

But does that mean there is a difference between the leadership practices of young people and the leadership practices of adults? The question itself assume a singular definition of “youth” and “adults” (and perhaps of “leadership”)...”
“I would suggest that there are significant differences in the needs, styles, and practices of leaders, depending upon a host of cultural or identity factors (including age). But age does not stand alone; youth, like adults, are unique combinations of age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, life experience, and other factors.”
LPI Sample Base

- LPI Online respondents
  - 2005 – 2008

- Total respondents > 1.1 million
  - 10% Self/Leaders

- Demographic information is available for about 21% of the total sample population
## LPI Frequency by Leader’s Age Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MTW</th>
<th>ISV</th>
<th>CTP</th>
<th>EOA</th>
<th>ETH</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>&lt; 32 years</td>
<td>44.0</td>
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<td>42.8</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>43.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>33 - 40 years</td>
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Frequency of leadership practices increase consistently from youngest to most senior leaders.
## LPI Ranking by Leader’s Age Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Category</th>
<th>MTW</th>
<th>ISV</th>
<th>CTP</th>
<th>EOA</th>
<th>ETH</th>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 32 years</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>33 - 40 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>41 - 49 years</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Rank order of leadership practices is consistent from youngest to most senior leaders.*
POSITIVE WORKPLACE ATTITUDE

1. My work group has a strong sense of team spirit.
2. I am proud to tell others that I work for this organization.
3. Two years from now I would like to be working for this organization.
4. I would work harder and for longer hours if the job demanded it.
5. I am highly productive in my job.
6. I am clear about what is expected of me in my job.
7. I feel that my organization values my work.
8. I am effective in meeting the demands of my job.
9. Around my workplace, people seem to trust the management.
10. I feel like I am making a difference in this organization.
VALIDITY: EXPLAINING PWA

Internal Reliability for the 10-item PWA scale is very high/strong (Cronbach alpha = .92)
Regression analysis finds that over 22% of the variance around PWA is explained by the Five Practices of Exemplary Leader ($p < .001$)
and that individual differences, such as:

- AGE
- Country
- Ethnicity
- Educational Level
- Functional Area
- Gender
- Hierarchical Level
- Industry
- Size of Organization
- Tenure with Organization
TOGETHER (10) they do not make a substantive contribution to explaining PWA (0.2%).

- **AGE** by itself accounts for **ZERO** variance in PWA

- Correlations between **AGE** and the Five Leadership Practices are **negligible** \( (r < .02) \).
We could we say?  
What value could we offer?

- Continued reading about the Millennial Generation and challenges of “leadership across generations”
- Collected survey data from thousands of college and high school students
- Participated in several focus groups with “millennials” involved with leadership development on their campus
We learned that

- Leadership begins within
- Leadership is personal
- Leadership is a relationship
- Leadership can’t be accomplished alone
- Leaders set the example
- Leaders see beyond the status quo
- Leaders are human
- Leaders are appreciative
- Leaders take chances
- Leadership is everyone’s business
And we had gone back full circle to where we had begun more than 25 years ago.

- We were reminded about the advice from many including Amanda, Darren and Miles: “Just tell us what you know ... in a way that makes sense.”
ENDURING LEADERSHIP TRUTHS

Jim Kouzes & Barry Posner
Truth 1
Leadership development begins with self development
What is the first question most people want to ask a new leader?

#1—Who *are* you?
Muhammad Ali Center

Introduces Ali’s epic life through six core values by which he lives:

- Respect
- Conviction
- Giving
- Confidence
- Dedication
- Spirituality

Ultimately, the Ali Center strives to inspire you to pursue your potential and explore the greatness that lies within yourself.
Values of American Managers

- I wish we spent more time examining our values in my organization. 54%
- I think we should pay more attention to values in managing our business. 65%
Leadership is personal... Do the people you lead know who you are, what you care about, and why they ought to be following you?

Ron Sugar
As long as you believe that what you're doing is meaningful, you can cut through the fear and exhaustion and take the next step.

Arlene Blum
Truth 2
You can’t do it alone.
What is a very simple definition of a leader?

In other words, how would you know if someone was a leader or not?
Leadership is a relationship
AXAM²: A Company Game Plan

Also: Dave Radack Talks Education
Critical success factors for top three jobs?

- # 1
- Relationships with Subordinates

Center for Creative Leadership
People *don’t* quit their companies. They quit *their* managers!
Studies show that the key to success is the manager's ability to build a coalition of supporter and collaborators.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter
Truth 3

The foundation of leadership is credibility.
What do you look for and admire in a leader, someone whose direction you would willingly follow?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Adjective</th>
<th>Positive Adjective</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ambitious</td>
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<td>Trait</td>
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<td>------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>18%</td>
<td>Ambitious</td>
</tr>
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<td>Broad-minded</td>
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<tr>
<td>26%</td>
<td>Caring</td>
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<td>66%</td>
<td>Competent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>Cooperative</td>
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<td>70%</td>
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<td>Percentage</td>
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<td>70%</td>
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## Essential Leader Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Honest</th>
<th>Forward-looking</th>
<th>Inspiring</th>
<th>Competent</th>
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<tr>
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<td>China</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
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Essential Characteristics of Leaders

- Honest
- Forward-looking
- Inspiring
- Competent
Credibility

- Trustworthiness
- Expertise
- Dynamism
Essential Leader Characteristics ... Credibility

- Honest
- Competent
- Inspiring
- Forward-Looking

→ Trustworthiness
→ Expertise
→ Dynamism
Truth 4

You either lead by example, or you don’t lead at all.
I couldn’t be one kind of a leader in the dorm and then some other kind of person or leader when I left.

Rachael Dickey
Let’s see if the whole group can clap together in perfect unison.
• Let’s clap our hands.
• Let’s see if the whole group can clap together in perfect unison:

*I’ll count to three, and RIGHT on three, you clap. Okay?*"
The model we set with our actions is far more powerful than anything we say.

Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner
At the end of the day, can you say that you acted in concert with your values?

Stan Anders
(organizations) where employees strongly believed their managers followed through on promises and demonstrated the values they preached were substantially more profitable than those whose managers scored average or lower.

Tony Simons
Truth 5
Being forward-looking most differentiates leaders.
What question is second on the list of what most people want to ask a new leader?

#2 – Where are we going?
Vision trumps everything. Organizations are most effective when a well-articulated and ambitious vision of the future exists.

Nancy Zimpher
“So, Jim, where do you see yourself in ten minutes?”
Forward-looking

- In Leaders 70%
- In Colleagues 27%
Forward-looking

- Professionals 70%
- College Students 31%
Legacy Thinking

- Executives 73%
- Mid-Managers 54%
- Supervisors 46%
Five Enduring Truths

1. Leadership development is self development.

2. You can’t do it alone.

3. Credibility is the foundation.

4. You either lead by example, or you don’t lead at all.

5. Being forward-looking most differentiates leaders.
MORE TRUTHS

• Leadership is in the moment.
• Challenge is the opportunity for greatness.
• Developing leaders takes time and practice.
• Leadership is everyone’s business
• Without trust you cannot lead.
• Leadership has to be from the heart.
• It’s never just the leader’s vision.
• Context matters but process rules.
Leadership development takes self-reflection. The need to set aside time, even a few minutes, to reflect on something that bothered me or I did well, so that I can both move on and move forward. This also helps me learn about other people and the impact that I have on them, and vice versa.

Casey Harbin