



The Leadership Landscape

January/February, 2008

A bi-monthly periodical published by the faculty of the Federal Executive Institute to help you continue your growth as a public sector leader.

"People don't buy three-eighths-inch drill bits. People buy three-eighths-inch holes."
Michael Porter

Upcoming Programs and Courses at FEI:



[Leading Public Sector Transformation. Online Session Begins July 14th, 2008. Resident Learning, August 25-28, 2008, Charlottesville, VA](#)

[Understanding the 360 Degree Leader. March 13-14, 2008, Charlottesville, VA](#)

[Leading Strategically: From Vision to Performance. March 31-April 2, 2008, Charlottesville, VA](#)

[Emotional Competence: Working with Others for Results. April 2-4, 2008, Charlottesville, VA](#)

[The Aspen Institute Executive Seminar. May 19-23, 2008, Charlottesville, VA](#)

Welcome from the Dean of Faculty:

Belated Happy New Year wishes from all of the FEI faculty. Of course, the new year brings with it a cascade of resolutions big and small. This tradition dates back at least to the days of early Rome, where Janus, a mythical king, was placed at the head of the calendar. With two faces, Janus could look back on past events and forward to the future. Janus provides a perfect model for our own leadership development – reflecting on and learning from recent experience while also planning for the new year. This first edition of the Leadership Landscape for 2008 offers just such an opportunity, with reflection-rich content and great ideas and programs to incorporate into your near future. Happy reading.

~Dr. Peter Ronayne, Dean of Faculty

Values-Based Leadership: Carol Gold, Stephen Blair, and John Stroup discuss the need for a Senior Executive Service Continuing Learning program on Leadership in a Democracy. [Read more...](#)

Values-Based Leadership: Amy Burge and John Stroup describe the crisis management literature and formulate a working definition for public sector leaders. [Read more...](#)

Policy in a Constitutional System: Rossie Carnes talks about the experience of a returning LDT five years after their FEI experience. [Read More...](#)

Transforming Organizations: In the second of two articles, Al Cooke provides a practical exercise for maintaining sanity and stability in a time of change. [Read more...](#)

[Executive Communication](#)
[Skills: Leading the Process](#)
[of Change, June 2-6, 2008,](#)
[Charlottesville, VA](#)

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Wellness and Balance Tip of the Month:

Don't Fall Over

So many of our wellness and balance tips refer readers to the importance of drinking or eating well. Others point out the necessity of maintaining physical strength, but as far as I can tell there isn't much talk about balance. As in, "don't fall over" type balance.

In a recent [New York Times article](#), Jane Brody points out a new [book](#) on the subject by Scott McCredie and discusses some helpful tips for developing your sense of balance while standing or moving. She offers a number of short exercises aimed at maintaining balance as the essential controls of balance deteriorate with age.

She writes, "To increase stability and strengthen the legs, stand with feet shoulder-width apart and arms straight out in front. Lift one foot behind, bending the knee at 45 degrees. Hold that position for five seconds or longer, if possible. Repeat this exercise five times. Then switch legs. As you improve, try one-leg stands with your eyes closed."

As Brody advises, try these balancing exercises when you brush your teeth, cook your next meal, or simply need a short break at work.

~ John Stroup, FEI Research Fellow

Values-Based Leadership

The Need for Senior Executive Service Development

Carol Gold, FEI Executive in Residence, Stephen Blair, FEI Senior Faculty,
and John Stroup, FEI Research Fellow

"In times of change, the learner will inherit the earth while the learned are beautifully equipped for a world that no longer exists." - Eric Hoffer

This year FEI will roll out new educational experiences dedicated to the continuing development of members of the Senior Executive Service. These interactive programs will promote the development of a cadre of SES leaders dedicated to our common enterprise, to our community, and to each other.

When the SES was created in 1978, [lawmakers](#) envisioned a noble leadership cadre capable of moving across agencies to solve problems where needed. The stated purpose of the SES was to "ensure that the executive management of the Government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the nation and otherwise is of the highest quality."

Along with mobility, ongoing professional development was meant to define the SES. We know from our discussions here at FEI that the attempt to develop senior leaders through limited job changes and temporary assignments does not adequately meet the unique educational needs of these high level public leaders. This new program helps to tackle those unmet needs head on.

In developing these programs, we first had to ask ourselves what kind of leadership we are talking about. One important image that arose was the concept of “trusteeship.” In a little known [article](#), Howard Gardner, the Harvard University psychology professor, recently discussed the need for societal trustees in America today. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, Gardner and his colleagues suggest that trusteeship in America has not declined, but has undergone some important changes.

Gardner argues that most people remain, as ever before, desirous of good and wise trustees of the American government. Despite the changing nature of *who* these trustees are, the American people continue to hold in high regard people who embody their value for ethical public leadership with integrity and helpfulness. This image of the Senior Executive Service forms the core of FEI’s new program.

FEI’s first SES Senior Leadership in Government Series program on Leadership in a Democracy, our desired outcomes for this program are as follows:

- Reconnect with the Constitution, the foundation for public service and public sector leadership.
- Strengthen leadership skills required for success in Mr. Madison’s system.
- Deepen cross-agency SES networks.

FEI Faculty will be joined by Professor Will Harris of *The Center for the Constitution*. The seminar will include a full day at [Montpelier](#), the home of President James Madison and case studies exploring practical leadership applications of the six elements of the Senior Executive Service’s Executive Core Qualifications: Leading People, Leading Change, Results Driven, Business Acumen, Building Coalitions and Basic Competencies.

Program dates will be announced soon – so please stay tuned for more details.

To inquire about this program, please contact Bonnie Boston 434/980-6277 or Cynthia Morgan 434/980-6275.

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Values-Based Leadership

Leadership as Crisis Management

Amy Burge and John Stroup, Research Fellows at FEI

- How do you define crisis?
- How do you plan for crisis?
- How do you effectively lead through crisis?

Crises, in varying magnitudes, perpetually occur throughout government work. Ranging from organizational crises to widespread security crises, a crisis of any magnitude has the potential for extreme

disruption to organizational performance. More importantly, experiencing crisis promises to drain personal energy and can make lasting emotional damage. In an effort to better understand crises and effective crisis management, a scholarly literature debates the definition of crisis, as well as the techniques for effective crisis management. In this short article we present the major “roadmarks” of recent scholarly debate about crisis management to clarify the terms and phenomena of crisis management in hopes that this will lead to better understanding and practice of the most difficult situations.

In order to better understand the practice of crisis management, one must first explore the definition of crisis. Let’s be clear about what crisis is not. A crisis is not disagreements among colleagues. It’s not a difficult ethical decision. In short, a crisis is not just a conflict. Crisis may involve these factors, but they cannot be defined by these situations alone. In [*Responding to Crisis: A Rhetorical Approach to Crisis Communication*](#) (2004), Dan Pyle Millar identifies eight characteristics that are often used to define a crisis situation (p. 19):

- A crisis suddenly occurs;
- A crisis demands quick reaction;
- It interferes with the entire organization’s performance;
- Uncertainty and stress permeate a crisis;
- It threatens the reputation and assets of the organization;
- A crisis escalates in intensity;
- It causes outsiders to scrutinize the organization; and,
- It will permanently alter the organization.

While these characteristics make intuitive sense, Pillar and others critique this conventional wisdom. As Pillar identifies, these definitions “leave the impression that most crises occur without warning, with little or no prior knowledge of the organization. In this sense, the organization can do little to prevent organizational crises from occurring” (p. 19). This critique highlights the notion that preparation is the key to crisis management and should be a crucial component to any understanding of crisis. Certainly, we should consider the importance of prior knowledge and preparation.

In doing so, we find a helpful set of heuristics that we should use to manage these difficult situations. Demonstrating a perspective of crisis management that incorporates the crucial element of preparation, in the [*Harvard Business Review on Crisis Management*](#) (2000), Norman R. Augustine distinguishes six stages in crisis management:

- Stage One: Avoiding the Crisis
- Stage Two: Preparing to Manage the Crisis
- Stage Three: Recognizing the Crisis
- Stage Four: Containing the Crisis
- Stage Five: Resolving the Crisis
- Stage Six: Profiting from the Crisis

We should be clear that no amount of proper prior preparation should be discounted. You will most certainly help yourself and your organization when crisis occurs if you have prepared well for emergency situations. If you’ve been in a crisis situation, however, most likely you’ll find Mr. Augustine’s six stages a bit unrealistic. In fact, far from profiting, most likely you’ll be thinking about the survival of your people, your organization, and most importantly yourself. This desire, simply to survive, is a fundamental defining characteristic of crisis.

As you well know, a crisis situation is fundamentally more difficult than a scholarly conversation regarding crisis management. When crisis hits, you must do more than survive. You must lead. The

question, of course, is how?

There are no complete answers to this question as each crisis situation is unique in its own way. However, we argue that a few helpful starting points can begin the move through crisis situations. First, no crisis will be resolved single-handedly. A crisis by its very nature is bigger than one person and must be managed by more than one person. Second, think in terms of managing energy. For example, push for big bursts of energy when momentum breaks your way. When the momentum swings away from you and your group (as it inevitably will in a crisis), focus on healing wounds and regaining the energy being deployed by your people. Fatigue is a true enemy in any crisis situation. Third, draw on the fundamental values that unite your team and your organization when survival is in jeopardy. We believe that one of the best preparations for crisis is the hard work of learning the values that unite and divide your organization. When crisis strikes, exercise leadership by drawing on those personal and public values.

Certainly, this article represents a limited discussion of crisis management. Our goal, however, is to introduce this important topic, and to engage the crisis management literature for the practical purpose of public leadership. When survival is your hope, leadership is required.

In thinking about crisis and crisis management, we pose some questions for you to ponder. Please send us your responses at leadership.landscape@opm.gov

- 1) How do you define crisis?
- 2) What are your initial reactions to crisis?
- 3) How do you prepare for crisis?
- 4) What are effective tools for managing crisis?

To learn more or register for programs that incorporate crisis management, please contact Bonnie Boston 434/980-6277 or Cynthia Morgan 434/980-6275

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Policy in a Constitutional System

A Returning LDT

Rossie Carnes, FEI Adjunct Faculty

Remember your executive training at the Federal Executive Institute? Do you often think you would like to recapture the magic of the place and your team?

As you well know, the Leadership for a Democratic Society program is conducted ten times a year. In each of these classes, teams of 8 or 9 strangers are formed. Through the experience of Week 1, this group of strangers quickly bonds. Usually by the end of the four week program, the team promises to keep in touch and to support each other in the challenges and opportunities ahead.

One team kept that promise. During the five years since graduation, the team has met in social settings at least twice a year and maintained e-mail and phone contact sharing both successes and challenges. The spouses, families, and significant others soon joined the team.

In January 2007, this team met to celebrate their five year anniversary. They explored the idea of returning to FEI as an intact team. The question was: how to make that happen? Each team member submitted a budget for training at the beginning of the year to ensure funds were available. Next, a dedicated time was agreed upon that worked with the FEI calendar. The team with me as their facilitator designed a three day seminar exclusively for the team reunion, scheduled for August 2007.

This program began, like their LDS experience, on Sunday evening by breaking bread together. As you well know, eating and talking at FEI is an indispensable part of the FEI experience. We sit together and we eat dinner. That it's usually inspirational, fun, and humorous is a beneficial consequence of a specific program aspect.

This group of executives decided that in five years since their FEI experience that they needed continuing development in a number of areas of public sector leadership. The first day of the program delved into Emotional Intelligence, Stress Management and Leading Across Generations. These experiences provided a renewed opportunity to focus on the importance of wellness and awareness of generational issues faced in the work force. More importantly, it allowed this group to build on the lessons that they learned from FEI five years ago by integrating their discussions with practical failures and successes in the workplace.

As always, the FEI experience is the experience of learning about and leading through values situated in the U.S. Constitution. The following day, the team traveled to Montpelier to learn with Professor Will Harris, a leading scholar on constitutional theory. A tour of Montpelier provided insight into the restoration of President Madison's home and a restoration of his views and ideas about the nature of the United States Constitution. Ever looking into the future, this group acknowledged the need for future public sector leaders to experience the grounds of Montpelier and to further the knowledge and discussion on the formation and intent of our Constitutional framework.

That afternoon, the team participated in a session on Global Leadership with FEI's Dean of the Faculty, Dr. Peter Ronayne. In the evening, the group explored the concept of shared-leadership with Marc Carraway and John Whitlow.

The program ended with a time of sharing lessons learned from experiences in the past five years and discussions of what the future might bring. This team left FEI for a second time reenergized and refocused on the good and difficult work ahead. As an example of the caliber of executives attending the LDS programs, when this team formed in January, 2002 – only one executive was a member of the Senior Executive Service. Today seven of the team members are SES.

I hope that the example of this LDS team can inspire you to rely on those team members with whom you experienced FEI no matter the time between meetings. As you know, your teammates are dedicated public sector leaders who can open doors for success and provide that essential personal and professional backing that you may need for success.

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Transforming Organizations

Maintaining Sanity and Stability in a Time of Change (The second article in a two part series)

Alfred L. Cooke, Ph.D., Director Center for Organizational Performance

Everything in the universe is subject to change---and everything is on schedule!

In the previous issue of the Leadership Landscape, I discussed four deeply held myths that inevitably confront any one faced with a change situation. Taken together these myths constitute some of the most difficult and inevitable issues that public sector leaders must face. In the second part of this article, I talk about some tangible steps to move beyond staying sane to becoming a leader within that process of change.

Dealing with change requires a paradigm shift for the typical person. It means being open to “possibility” and not rejecting it out of hand. It requires being “in the question.” Many times the typical initiative is not locked in stone when it is introduced. There is always the possibility of influencing the process of implementation and the ultimate outcome.

A Little Exercise in Identifying the Source of Anxiety about Change. Change affects us personally. Our reaction to it is personal and often seen as “throwing us back to zero”. Below are listed some of the areas that have been identified as causing a sense of loss and powerlessness when people face change. Read through the list and check each area where you feel change will affect you. Then rank the first 5 of these areas.

Check	Rank
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Predictability
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Control
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Meaning
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Clarity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Job security
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Status
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Authority
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Skill
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Competence

After ranking the five areas of most concern you, have a manageable list of things on which you can be proactive thus diminishing the feelings of powerlessness and anxiety.

Like most decisions in our lives there are actually only three basic choices available: to **change**, to **enhance**, or to **maintain the status quo**.

Once you understand into what category the decision falls, it gives you a path to follow in taking action.

- **Change.** Discover how you can change so that the new situation is more easily managed. Thus, for instance if one of your priorities is SKILL (from the survey above) then you may want to start looking at how you can gain a whole new set of capabilities or new skills that will make you a greater contributor to the new organization that is being implemented. Remember that you more than likely have 18 months to two years before the “hammer will fall” on the new skill sets that have to be in place. Consider the introduction of the change as a “heads up” that you have work to do to change in order to more closely fit the needs of the new structure.
- **Enhance.** Enhancing, as a proactive step, involves finding a way to build upon what is in place either in your own skills or the situation. Are there new skill sets that you can put in place or tweaking of the environment to reduce the impact of the change? Is there something that can be done to help to get through the situation? Is there a way to redefine the situation to reduce the anxiety that is caused? Enhancement assumes that what is in place is acceptable and useable. What is needed is an “add on” that makes the situation more palatable.
- **Maintain the Status Quo.** Maintaining the status quo is a conscious decision to “wait and see”---to do nothing, but to see how the situation evolves. Most of us maintain the status quo by an unconscious decision. In order to make this choice proactive it must be a conscious choice—one that has been thought out and all possible options considered. The decision is one that can relieve anxiety because it is thought out—not just allowed to happen because of inaction.

“Everything in the universe is subject to change—and everything is on schedule!” This kind of thinking may be the most important mindset that is required to deal with change. In order to create this shift in your thinking here are Ten Commandments of Change:

1. There are always many “right” ways to do anything.
2. Plans are maps that chart a course which may change.
3. We seldom have all the facts and cannot control all the details.
4. Delegation is done on faith that others will help discover answers.
5. Learn to work in the rain and dance on a slippery floor.
6. It's often wiser to ask forgiveness than permission.
7. Stay in the question as long as you can.
8. Be proactive about any decision—even a decision to do nothing.
9. There is no such thing as failure, only feedback.
10. Think.....creatively.

If you want assistance with designing, implementing, and evaluating change in your agency contact Dr. Alfred Cooke, Director of the Center for Organizational Performance at the Federal Executive Institute (Alfred.cooke@opm.gov or 434-980-6360).

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