

# The Leadership Landscape



**May/June,  
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.

## **Upcoming Programs and Courses at FEI :**

**July 7-8, 2008**

Creating Breakthroughs:  
Innovating in Government  
Charlottesville, VA

**July 9-11, 2008**

Senior Executive Service  
Leadership Horizons: The  
Constitution and  
Contemporary Public  
Service

Charlottesville, VA

**August 4-6, 2008**

## **In this issue:**

- **Article 1:** FEI's Global Initiatives by **Michael Rawlings, FEI Senior Faculty**
- **Article 2:** Developing Resilience: A Key to Executive Efficacy by **Doug Silsbee, FEI Adjunct Faculty**
- **Article 3:** Stereotyping! by **Alfred L. Cooke, Ph.D., Director, Center for Organizational Performance, Federal Executive Institute**

## **Welcome from the Dean:**

"Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there" – so Will Rogers exhorted us to keep in mind. And at FEI, there is certainly no "track sitting." As this early summer edition of

Polarity Leadership Program  
Arlington, VA

**August 6-8, 2008**

Leading Through  
Constructive Conflict  
Arlington, VA

**September 3-5, 2008**

Leading Strategically: From  
Vision to Performance  
Arlington, VA

**September 3-5, 2008**

Senior Executive Service  
Leadership Horizons: The  
Constitution and  
Contemporary Public  
Service  
Charlottesville, VA

**September 8-12, 2008**

Leadership for a Global  
Society  
Warrenton, VA

**September 17-19, 2008**

A Leader's Guide for  
Developing Resilience  
Charlottesville, VA

**September 21-26, 2008**

Public Sector Leadership:  
Vision, Values, and Vital  
Strategies  
San Diego, CA

**September 23-24, 2008**

Planning and Organizational  
Strategy for Public Sector  
Employees  
Washington, DC

the Leadership Landscape highlights, FEI is moving into new and exciting leadership development arenas, namely globally focused programs and a new series of programs offered exclusively for our SES colleagues. We'd love your feedback on both of these – and your attendance even more! Happy reading.

-Dr. Pete Ronayne, Dean of Faculty

### Wellness and Balance Tip of the Month:

Looking forward to that Saturday morning slumber so you can catch some extra ZZZs that you might have lost during the week? Well you might want to think again. According to a recent article by leading wellness researcher, John Bates, taking a day off from your normal sleep schedule is actually detrimental to adequate body rest. Bates says,

Our sleep-wake cycle is regulated by a "circadian clock" in our brain and the body's need to balance both sleep time and wake time. A regular waking time in the morning strengthens the circadian function and can help with sleep onset at night. That is also why it is important to keep a regular bedtime and wake-time, even on the weekends when there is the temptation to sleep-in.

Check out Bates's blog [here](#) and be sure to read up on some more tips to maximize your wellness through healthy sleep habits. Pretty soon those nine-minute snoozes will be a thing of the past!

-Tripp Purks, FEI Research Intern

*The SES Leadership Horizons Series*

## Peter Ronayne, Ph.D., Dean of Faculty

Today more than ever, the American people need leaders devoted to public service and lifelong learning. For experienced members of the Senior Executive Service -- given their key roles across government -- this means an enhanced imperative for regularly renewed leadership perspectives and skills at the highest level. Given that, FEI is excited to announce its new *Leadership Horizons* series which is specifically designed for this cadre of leaders and learners and focuses on pressing issues of the day while drawing on lessons of the past.

Like the nation we serve, *Leadership Horizons* is founded on a strong and invigorating sense of the public service and core Constitutional values. Within that key framework, participants will join with FEI faculty, distinguished guest speakers, and peers from across government to expand their leadership horizons by exploring the latest thinking in the field of leadership and learning new ways of leading effectively in the challenging public/political environment that defines the SES.

The first offering in the Horizons series, *The Constitution and Contemporary Public Sector Leadership* will provide an unrivalled opportunity to step back from day-to-day demands to explore and better understand the unique, demanding, and ultimately rewarding leadership milieu in which Federal executives operate and seek to excel. Splitting time between FEI's Charlottesville campus and Montpelier, the home of President James Madison, father of the Constitution, seminar participants will heighten their understanding of historical antecedents to their contemporary leadership and discover new perspectives and approaches to apply back in their organizations. Over an intense 3-day seminar, participants will:

- Reconnect with the Constitution, concepts of public service and "trusteeship", and grapple with key values issues underlying public sector leadership
- Strengthen key leadership skills required for success in leading employees and navigating the career/political interface
- Deepen your cross-agency SES network and your "corporate" sense of the Federal sector

The *Leadership Horizons Series* is designed for Federal leaders with a minimum of two years experience at the SES level, senior military officers, and state/local/international counterparts. Because of FEI's emphasis on interagency networks and building a vibrant learning community, participants will be selected to represent the fullest range of the Federal sector as possible. The full FEI family is genuinely excited about this new series of programs. To make the Horizons series the best it can be, we solicit your input and ideas for topical areas of focus for future offerings. Please send those at your convenience to

[peter.ronayne@opm.gov](mailto:peter.ronayne@opm.gov)

And spaces in the upcoming July 9-11 and September 3-5 Horizons seminars are filling up fast – so to register contact the OPM main customer service line at 888-676-9632.

---



## ***FEI's Global Initiatives***

Michael Rawlings, FEI Senior Faculty

As the faculty member newly appointed to head FEI's Global Initiatives, I regularly ponder the best ways to enhance our work on global awareness. Priorities include:

- a) increasing the number of non-US executives in the *Leadership for a Democratic Society* program to enhance global awareness and thinking and to build key relationships with our peers around the world;
- b) launching a global issues speaker series to bring experts on key topics to FEI and other venues;
- c) offering FEI's first *Leadership for a Global Society* (LGS) program to be held September 8-12, 2008; and
- d) d) hosting our first-ever non-US Faculty member this year.

So much for form. What about substance?

How do we find the right balance of global issues – and relationships - that can have the greatest impact and make the biggest difference for our Federal executives directly and indirectly involved with global work when that work not only involves the entire world but also crosses sectors including defense, security, commerce, diplomacy, energy and environment, agriculture, space and sea, health and medicine, immigration, disaster relief and many others?

We've created a set of topics and have done initial vetting to refine what we believe will be of most interest to and relevance for our Federal executives. We'll continue to solicit input and collaborate as we create and expand each of these programs with an eye to current and future needs in the fast moving global environment.

Topics on the agenda for our upcoming *Leadership for a Global Society* program in September include: "The Borderless World"; "Global Demographics: Age, Gender, Religion, Culture and Other Critical Issues"; "Global Survey and Context" and "The U.S. in the World" policy and experience panels and discussion; "Global Interactions: Foreign Press, Government and Business Leaders"; "Building and Leading a Global Team" and "Cultural Awareness and Interaction"; "Experiences of U.S. Public Servants in the Global Context – Roles, Views and Experiences – a panel discussion"; "International Negotiation, Partnering and Collaboration"; and "A Case for International Leadership Competencies".

In true FEI form the LGS course will include excellent speakers and panelists as well as extensive networking opportunities. A field experience day is planned to Washington, D.C. with visits to key global institutions and including presentations and networking with their representatives. And overall, FEI's full slate of global activities will help the Institute maintain its ongoing role as a thought leader delivering state of the art programs in the area of public sector leadership.

For more information or to register for LGS, please contact the Program Manager, Ms. Barbara Goldman, at [Barbara.Goldman@opm.gov](mailto:Barbara.Goldman@opm.gov) or by phone at (434) 980-6383.



## ***Developing Resilience: A Key to Executive Efficacy***

Doug Silsbee, FEI Adjunct Faculty

Research consistently shows that resilience, or the ability to learn and be effective in the

face of setbacks and challenges, is a critical factor in leader success. This is as true in government as in any other professional domain.

As leaders, we often cannot control what is thrown at us. The workings of government are sometimes inefficient and frustrating. Through paying attention, we observe colleagues who consistently rise to the challenges of leading in these circumstances, and others who become paralyzed. The difference is resilience.

Resilience, or the fundamental internal capacity to choose our attitude and our responses, can be developed as a discrete competency. Yet, we challenge you to ask yourself how much you have consciously invested in developing this critical capacity!

There are specific moves that you can make in order to further your resilience. First, as a resilient leader, you can take certain external actions in relation to the people and the system around you. Second, internal practices can develop your capacity to stay true to yourself and effective in the face of seemingly overwhelming change. Building competency in each of these areas will produce much greater resilience.

### **External actions**

Assess the people in your network for how well they support you, and cultivate partnerships around shared commitments. Invest yourself in relationships that are sustaining. Similarly, limit your investment in relationships that drain you.

Step back and identify your leverage points. In the midst of chaos, reactivity often keeps us involved in activities that don't matter. Be pro-active in choosing the actions that have the most leverage.

### **Inner practices**

Remind yourself frequently of what's most deeply important to you, and "for the sake of what" you do this work. An unshakeable commitment to a purpose can be the North Star that guides you when other elements are shifting and changing.

Resilience is developed through the body. Take time to engage in regular bodily practices that build and sustain your energy and resilience. Beyond regular exercise, specific practices can develop a strong leadership presence, and a corresponding capacity to see possibilities in any circumstance.

Choose your perspective. It is easy to focus on the complexity of your role, and the constraints on all sides. However, other perspectives are always available, and nobody can take away your ability to choose a perspective that is empowering and helpful. Think of exercising this choice as a discrete skill that can be learned and practiced.

Your resilience is essential both to your effectiveness as a leader, and to finding enduring fulfillment through service. Focusing on resilience as a central part of your development plan will produce pay-offs in everything that you do.

*Doug is an author and leadership coach in Asheville, NC. Along with Bev Wann, Silsbee will teach a September 17-19 seminar at FEI entitled [A Leader's Guide to Developing Resilience: Sustaining Your Capacity to Lead in Challenging Times](#), built around the five distinctions above.*

---

# ***Stereotyping!***

Alfred. L. Cooke, Ph.D.

Director, Center for Organizational Performance, Federal Executive Institute

I have consciously displayed the word **stereotyping** in the title of this article to represent the harshness of it when it is applied to us. Stereotyping takes away some of our individuality and humanity. When that happens we feel diminished and marginalized. The reason of course is that we have no control of how others choose to define us.

Anytime you belong to a "group" you have likely been a victim of stereotyping. Many times we are unaware that others are stereotyping us. It is usually when we become aware of the harshness of stereotyping that it hits home for us. Our usual response is anger and frustration.

Unfortunately I am observing more and more the tendency to use stereotyping as a way of dealing with others today. We actually have begun to make it academically acceptable to use stereotyping.

Some of you will recognize that I have created a distinction in approaching this subject as a "glass half empty" process. There is a "glass half full" approach that in reality is a useful tool for us as human beings.

Stereotypes, as opposed to stereotyping, are a useful tool that makes it possible for humans to deal with large amounts of data. A stereotype is nothing more than an accumulated aggregate of data that fits a pattern that we can recognize and organize the information we have before us. Stereotypes are in fact a hypothesis that we test for their accurateness.

When you enter an organization or a cohesive group you immediately confront the culture of that group. Remembering that culture is nothing more than the rules and processes that we create for dealing with limited resources, then one can see first, where stereotypes may evolve from, and second, how useful it can be to have them for making sense of the situation.

So.....the first conclusion I would draw is that stereotypes are not necessarily bad, so long as they are treated as a hypothesis which we then test out to determine their usefulness.

Where we get into trouble is when we take the proactive step to apply stereotyping as a given and then proceed to act upon them as if they are a reality. *Stereotyping is an unfair and unsubstantiated decision making process that produces actions that put individuals and groups at a disadvantage.*

I find that many of the ways that we look at groups fall into this category. A few examples might be helpful.

## Generations

The work that is being done to look at the generational differences is extremely exciting and useful. The thesis of the discipline is that certain generational groups who have a shared experience based in being born into a specified chronological time period will tend to share characteristics and ways they see the world.

There are four popular generational categories that are most often identified. They include:

1. Millennials or Generation 2001ers, born after 1980
2. Baby Busters or Generation Xers born between 1965 and 1980
3. Baby Boomers born between 1946 and 1964
4. Mature Citizens born between 1909 and 1945

How we see these individuals and their responding patterns lends itself to using stereotypes. Thus, baby boomers are often identified as embracing a team based approach, anti rules and regulations, and while they don't like problems, if you give them a cause they will fight for it.

Such information is useful as a means of taking in the wealth of information about the *boomers*. It provides a means of seeing the world through the eyes of the *boomers*. It also presents a set of hypotheses that can be tested in how we interact with individuals who fall into the *boomer* category.

The contrast between useful **stereotypes** and **stereotyping** that is harmful can be seen by using examples taken from past presentations which purported to report the same data.

Baby Boomer Descriptions:

### **Stereotypes**

Postwar Prosperity

Indulgence

Self-Awareness

Activism

### **Stereotyping**

Spend thrifts

Self Indulgent

Touchy Feelers

Tree Huggers

In the former the descriptors provide what appears to be a neutral set of terms that can be useful in looking at behavior and cultural norms. They do not depict the boomers in terms that can be used to marginalize or diminish them.

The latter, however, presents a prejudicial set of judgments that lend themselves to a depiction of a group that may be less than favored or appreciated. Such terms often lead to ridicule and marginalization—especially in work settings.

### The MBTI

Similarly, the Meyers-Brigs Type Indicator can be used either negatively to depict groups or as a tool for organizing the huge amount of data that comes with understanding human behavior.

The MBTI, as it is often referred, suggests that humans adapt through the preferences they use. Like the Generations research there is an assumption that one can use these “stereotypes” to organize the enormous amount of data that identifies human behavior. Looking at one type one can get a feel for how stereotypes and stereotyping play out.

ISTJ’s are described by their preference for “doing what should be done”. Thus, some possible useful stereotype and not useful stereotyping characteristics include:

<b>Stereotype</b>	<b>Stereotyping</b>
Organized	Anal Retentive
Trustworthy	Boy scout, straight arrow
Private	Clandestine, withdrawn
Attention to detail	Fussy, Matter-of-fact

Clearly being described as organized carries significant positive data that can be useful in understanding how one’s preferences come into play. Being described as “fussy” suggests a whole new set of red flags, and likely exaggerated perceptions.

### Johnson and Johnson Conflict Styles

The last example that is illustrative is the Johnson and Johnson Conflict Styles process. The process assumes that in every situation we are responsible for our actions. Conflict situations offer each of us an opportunity to choose a style for responding to the conflict. The key to effective conflict prevention and management is to choose the conflict management style appropriate for the conflict. Most of us have a favorite style that we use in conflict situations, but we are all capable of choosing a different style when it is appropriate.

Five main types of conflict management styles are described below: Cooperative problem-solving, competing, avoiding, accommodating and compromising.

<b>Stereotype</b>	<b>Stereotyping</b>
-------------------	---------------------

Competing	Competitive
Compromising	Compromiser
Avoiding	Avoider
Accommodating	Accommodator
Cooperative Problem Solving	Cooperator

In the stereotype case the data represents a preference or style. In the latter it has the implications of being a moniker to which one is wed. Stereotyping, again, puts the individual to whom it is applied at a disadvantage because it assumes there is no place for "movement". *"You are the way you are and that is the way I will respond to you."*

It is a fairly safe assumption that most if not all "preference" inventories have a potential for abuse in the hands of the ill prepared facilitator. Many of us who use the instruments and who are prepared in the behavioral sciences fall into the trap of stereotyping. We also know that many of the individuals "on whom we experiment" with these preference inventories do not have the behavioral science sophistication or background to know that the results of these inventories is not fixed. The result is that a tremendous amount of stereotyping occurs that is detrimental to the settings in which they are used.

Several years ago I came upon an illustration of this misuse of preference data that resulted in stereotyping and abuse of the instrumentation. I worked with an office of a national security agency that had prior to my coming into the system done some Meyers Briggs workshops. As I was being shown around the agency I noticed that on the door under each staff person's name was a bronze plaque that identified their Meyers Briggs Type. My guide in briefing me as we walked the halls repeatedly noted "This is Joe Smith. Joe is our Introvert." "This is Mary Jones. She is our anal retentive sensor." Until I pointed out the effects of such stereotyping they as an organization placed each other in these immutable categories that marginalized the affected party.

So, how do we avoid the deleterious effects of stereotyping? First, we as individuals who "deliver the news" of preference in whatever the inventory we are using, need to

- Be aware of the language we use in describing these preferences,
- Avoid the temptation to make light of the characteristics of any particular preference,
- Take time to bring students and those in our classes to a better understanding of what the instrument in question is designed to do,
- Provide more opportunities during the training we do to have participants display how they have taken in what we have taught and give coaching so that they can avoid stereotyping.

Stereotyping, brings us to situations "hard wired". We fail to understand or appreciate that individuals can adapt and approach situations differently even though they may be a part

of a group.

Preference data is a powerful tool for helping individuals to organize the enormous amount of data that they are confronted with everyday. These powerful and positive stereotypes that result make a very useful hypotheses that can lead to greater understanding and positive dialogue. By participating in hypothesis testing and by being "in the question" we can learn about others and how to engage them.

Michaelangelo is reported to have said that when he approaches a new piece of stone that he lets the stone tell him what it will become. Preference data is like that stone it should be treated with openness to possibility and willingness to see what is there.

[Suggestions, Stories, Feedback—Contact Us!](#)

The Leadership Landscape  
The Federal Executive Institute  
1301 Emmet Street, Charlottesville, VA 22903  
434-980-6200

To unsubscribe please respond here: [Unsubscribe](#)

Got this as a forward? Send us an [email](#) and we'll sign you up for future editions.

© Copyright 2008 The Leadership Landscape

For previous issues of the Leadership Landscape, please check out our new archives hosted by the Federal Executive Institute Alumni Association at <http://www.feiaa.org/leadershiplandscape.php>

We value your privacy. We do not and will not sell, rent, or loan your information to anyone outside The Federal Executive Institute.