



The Leadership Landscape

July/August, 2006

A bi-monthly periodical published by the faculty of the **Federal Executive Institute** to help you continue your growth as an executive leader.

Quote of the Month: "I don't think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday."
~Abraham Lincoln

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Welcome from the Dean of Faculty: *Welcome to the FEI faculty's new publication, "The Leadership Landscape." We want you, as alumni, to continue to grow as leaders and this bi-monthly journal will keep you up to date with current leadership research, both what our faculty study and publish, as well as current research done in the executive education field worldwide. This month, we focus on the importance of continued, life-long leadership development—in yourself, in your employees, and in your organizations. The lack of opportunities for development is cited as one of the top reasons employees leave their jobs. And the ability to develop others is also one of the latest additions to OPM's executive core competencies. So as you finalize year end spending and prepare next year's budget, make sure leadership development is reflected in the numbers. Happy reading...*
~Dr. Peter Ronayne, Dean of Faculty

Values-Based Leadership: In this month's featured book review, we take a look at two recent reads: Generation Debt and Generation Me, which both shed some light on the values and behaviors of Generation X. We've identified what leaders need to know about "adultescents": their unique expectations, communication styles, as well as some strategies for scaffolding their leadership development. [Read more...](#)

Global Perspectives: Dr. Peter Ronayne, Dean of Faculty at FEI, reflects on the effects globalization has on federal executives present and future. But how has this trend affected leadership development? So far, not enough! [Read more...](#)

Policy in a Constitutional System: New Congressional proposals mandate the training of federal supervisors. Senate bill 3492 and Senate bill 3584 require that the head of each agency develop a comprehensive management succession program to develop managers within the agency as well as performance appraisal programs to promote high performance. What will this mean for your organization? [Read More...](#)

Transforming Organizations: FEI faculty member Dr. Al Cooke, director of the Center for Organizational Performance, remarks on the importance of "Being in the



Question.” [Read more...](#)

Wellness and Balance Tip of the Month: Every hour, on the hour, take a stretch break and drink a glass of water! You’ll be well on your way to reaching the “six glasses of water a day” benchmark.

For more information on determining how much water you should drink each day, follow this link to the Mayo Clinic’s recent study on water consumption. [Mayo Clinic](#)

Values-Based Leadership

Younger Workers, Older Expectations--book reviews of “Generation Debt” and “Generation Me”

Retaining the latest generations of employees (known as Gen X and Gen Y or Millennials) entering the workforce is at the forefront of many executive minds and has thus been the subject of many recent studies of generational differences. Two recent books, Generation Me by Jean Twenge, Associate Professor of Psychology at San Diego State University and Generation Debt by Anya Kamantz, Pulitzer Prize nominee for her contributions on generation studies, collectively showcase both the **typical behaviors of today’s younger workers (and the causes behind those behaviors) as well as some tips for training and retaining these young leaders.**

Twenge’s Generation Me warns that GenX/Y (those aged in their early thirties to those in elementary school currently) has “a very different outlook on life”—**they can appear disrespectful, narcissistic, and overly informal** to Baby Boomers and Traditionalist-era executives. And with 60% of employers saying that their workplaces suffer from tension among generations, executives need to be sensitive and adept at working with a large age-range of workers.

At first glance, the youngest generation of workers has had it easy—they have not been drafted into war, have not witnessed a stock-market crash, and have grown up with free, integrated public education. But Twenge points to unique challenges faced by this generation, struggles which are echoed in Anya Kamantz’s Generation Debt, including the skyrocketing cost of housing and child-care; the competitive college, grad school, and job markets; and the subsequent debt crisis that many young workers are coping with. According to Twenge, “the best thing you can do is realize that this generation is not ‘spoiled’ and does not ‘have it easy.’”

So what are these unique behaviors exhibited by Gen X/Y, according to Generation Me, and how can executives leverage their assets while managing their weaknesses?

1. **When Gen X is overly-informal, model formality:** Gen X/Y “will be frank” and “may come off as disrespectful when they are merely being friendly” in the workplace. They are, for example, quite comfortable critiquing their elders and making suggestions for improvement.

Twenge suggests that Gen X/Y may “need some guidance on how to deal with older people...Some young employees might need to **be taught to ‘clean up’ when talking to older folks**, using ‘Mr.’ and ‘Mrs.’ as well as speaking more formally.” Modeling appropriate levels of verbal formality as well as correcting inappropriate comments (in a one-on-one setting) should solve the problem. Be sure to follow your corrections with an explanation of why such formality is necessary in the office.

Realize also that many Gen X/Yers value flexibility in their schedules and casual dress—they love to do their own thing. Perks like flexible schedules (telecommuting options, for example), independence, and a casual dress code may not only assist in retaining these workers, but also attract new ones to your “cool” workplace.

2. **Gen X/Y responds best to frequent feedback with explanations.** When providing feedback to Gen X/Y, understand that this is a generation motivated by praise and appreciation (not work for work’s sake)

and who respond well to frequent feedback. Short, frequent, informal meetings with Gen X/Yers are the most effective way of providing feedback. Begin with “something positive” when you need to criticize their work and “explain the reason behind your criticism. Do not be surprised if you encounter defensiveness. Things will go better if you can take that in stride and not get defensive in return; just explain exactly why it’s wrong and move on.”

Providing explanations behind assignments and decisions is also key to motivating Gen X/Y. “Today’s young people were instructed to ‘Never just do what an adult asks. Always ask, ‘Why?’” In that vein, when working with Gen X/Y, assignments and feedback should always include the “why” component.

3. **They learn best by doing.** When training your young employees, keep in mind that they will learn best by doing. “Raised with the Internet and in collaborative learning classrooms, they are not used to sitting through long, boring lectures. Training seminars (and meetings) will put them to sleep if they are not interactive.” Seek out training facilities that are interactive and perk up meetings with video clips, moving graphics, role-playing, and task-oriented sessions.

Continued job training is a top retention strategy for all generations of employees—when employers don’t invest in employees through continued learning, especially in Gen X/Y (who are used to being invested in!), they quit or look for new job opportunities! So as FY 2007 dawns anew, be sure to invest in the development of your employees. Higher retention rates will be your sure reward! ~ Holly Newman [Back to Top](#)

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Global Perspectives

Leadership Training with a Global Edge

The United States, and thus the federal government, finds itself in an unprecedented maelstrom of globalization. Most issues have a global component: Trade policy; Drug interdiction; AIDS; Labor practices and protections; Biological diversity; Clean air standards; Food and drug safety; Transportation security; Nation building; and, Disaster relief. At least eight of 12 critical issues identified by the Government Accountability Office in a report on 21st century challenges have significant global content.

The forces of economic integration, networking across national borders, an exponential communications revolution, proliferation of nongovernmental and international organizations, and the rise of transnational issues are reshaping the contours of world politics and the pressing issues facing governments everywhere.

The work and responsibilities of the government are clearly a microcosm of these trends, even in traditionally domestic arenas. The Social Security Administration, after all, manages more than 20 bilateral agreements. With each day, our traditional division between domestic and foreign becomes more of a fiction, a concept that helps us mentally order our world, but describes it less and less accurately. Further, the presumption that global leadership and related issues are limited to foreign affairs and defense agencies alone is invalid and dangerous.

Yet despite increasing international responsibilities, most civil servants, particularly in domestic agencies, have received little preparation. In research by the Office of Personnel Management's Federal Executive Institute, more

than two-thirds of federal leaders surveyed rated their own proficiency for international work below midpoint on a five-point scale. According to a 2003 RAND Corp. report, "The nation is producing too few future leaders who combine substantive depth with international experience and outlook."

Within the federal sector, outposts of global perspective have slowly emerged. For example, at NASA, leadership and management development features an international competency. But isolated islands are not enough. The agenda for today's federal employees at all levels must include the development of international, intercultural and strategic perspectives essential for the nation to succeed in our globalized world.

Leadership development programs must expand to incorporate broad, global outlooks and understanding. Qualifications should reflect the 21st century by including an international competency, which would then be built into professional development programs. An enhanced Intergovernmental Personnel Act Mobility Program could facilitate these assignments with rich international content.

The newly formed Global Leadership Consortium at the National Academy of Public Administration has potential as a center of excellence. Being developed in partnership with the Federal Executive Institute, the Graduate School at the Agriculture Department and the State Department's Foreign Service Institute, the consortium will serve as a research and learning network that supports agencies in cultivating leaders who excel in the global environment.

It's time for the federal sector to move into global leadership development. The stakes could not be higher in the realm of security and beyond. Richard N. Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, perhaps best sums it up in *The Opportunity: America's Moment to Alter History's Course* (Public Affairs, 2005) saying, "This continues to be a moment of rare opportunity for the United States and the world. The United States, working with the governments of the other major powers, can still shape the course of the 21st century and bring about a world that is to a striking degree characterized by peace, prosperity and freedom for most of the globe's countries and peoples. Opportunity, though, is just that. It represents possibility, not inevitability."

For the nation to seize this opportunity requires a globally savvy federal corps - whether one of 73,000 overseas or one of the legions stateside working on issues with international implications. Whether an empire, hyperpower, hegemony or unrivaled great power, America faces unique leadership demands, which require that we invest time and resources to ensure that our public servants are the best and brightest global leaders possible. ~Dr. Peter Ronayne [Back to Top](#)



Policy in a Constitutional System

Proposed Legislation Mandating Leadership Development in the Federal Government

“Developing Others,” the newest Executive Core Qualification (ECQ) competency, remains one of the most challenging aspects of public sector leadership. This new competency requires government leaders not only to develop themselves but also to develop new leaders to take on supervisory roles in the federal government. With the imminent retirement of the baby boom generation, the process of developing others requires thoughtful and purposeful action by public sector leaders.

Two new workforce performance bills proposed by Senator George Voinovich (R – OH), [S. 3492](#), and Senator Daniel Akaka (D – HI), [S. 3584](#), mandate the development of leaders who can in turn develop the leadership capacities of their employees. Both of these bills originating in the [Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs](#) place mandatory training programs for supervisors at the center of their reform efforts.

The need for federal executive training remains an essential need for improved quality and efficiency of government services. Introducing *The Federal Workforce Performance Appraisal and Management Improvement Act* on June 13th, 2006, Senator Voinovich remarked that, “of all the things in which government can invest, resources dedicated to human capital bring the greatest return.” Similarly, Senator Akaka, remarked at the introduction of the *Federal Supervisor Training Act* on June 27th, 2006, that, “effectiveness and efficiency of government programs and services depend on well-trained managers.” **These two policy proposals stress the importance of leadership development as an essential quality in any good organization.**

On June 29th, 2006, the [Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia](#) held a hearing to consider these two bills. **Each witness remarked on the importance of mandatory supervisory training and leadership development of current and future government leaders.** This leadership development, according to Ms. McGinnis, should be “engaging, actionable, realistic, and tailored to provide feedback, coaching and opportunities for improvement.”

As the new ECQs take effect in October, government leaders are confronted with the challenge to “develop others” in their organizations. Mandatory training for supervisors may be on the horizon. Whether by statute or not, “developing others” remains a critical part of organizational success.

Some highlights from each bill:

- S. 3492, *The Federal Workforce Performance Appraisal and Management Improvement Act* includes,
 - a requirement for agencies to develop a performance appraisal system designed to assess performance, provide feedback, address poor performance, and reward excellent performance;
 - mandatory training programs for supervisors to develop future managers and to communicate performance expectations and appraisals of employees; and,
 - new regulations for pay based upon the appraisal of performance.
- S. 3584, the *Federal Supervisor Training Act* includes,
 - mandatory training programs for supervisors that provide “interactive instructor-based training” for developing and achieving organizational goals, mentoring and motivating employee performance, and managing unacceptable performance;
 - a mentor program for new supervisors by experienced supervisors; and,
 - the development of standards and assessments that connect training with targeted needs.

FEI remains committed to helping you “develop others” in your agency or organization. For more information regarding FEI’s programs in this area, please pay a visit to our [Public Sector Leadership: Vision, Values, and Vital Strategies](#) program that will take place in San Diego on September 17-22, 2006. For a custom designed program for your organization, [contact Dr. Al Cooke](#) at 434-980-6276. ~ John Stroup [Back to Top](#)



Transforming Organizations

Being in the Question

As human beings we tend to be uncomfortable in “not knowing.” The result is that we either move to being in “answering” mode or we deny our lack of understanding because of the attack upon our egos for “not knowing.” We want to appear to be competent. We want to see a resolution to every issue—even if in moving into the answer does not, in the end, lead to achieving a real solution.

When we look at creative people and how they do what they do we find that they are constantly in exploratory mode. They throw themselves in to their milieu with open minds. They experience the moment with exploring eyes, test assumptions, and in the end, find the one direction that “feels” right for them. Creative people have the mindset of the artist.

Michelangelo is reported to have responded to the question “How do you decide how you will approach a piece of work in stone?” by saying “The stone tells me what it will be.” **Being in the question means being able to approach an unknown with a mindset that is open to answers.** It means living without solutions until a solution evolves.

So..... in a very practical sense, how does “being in the question” improve the capability of leaders to lead? Let’s go back to Michelangelo. What did he bring to the stone that would allow him to feel confident that he could let the process go where it would go?

He brought first of all, a *questioning mind*. He was able to have an internal conversation that allowed him to *let his impression of the stone be filtered through his experience*. Secondly, he *brought a skill in sculpture* that gave him a confidence that he could chip away at the stone and shape it in the most efficient way to produce a beautiful end product. Third, he brought *a willingness to make “the answer”* a reality by putting in the time to achieve the goal he finally came up with. Fourth, he was *able to be comfortable with “what the stone told him”* that would guide him in developing a final product.

Being “in the question” means putting the past in a place where it can be called on when needed but focusing on the uncertainty of a future not yet envisioned.

How do we, as leaders, get into this place of being in the question? The first step is to acknowledge our anxiety and discomfort about the past and to admit that actions taken in the past have led to the current situation. Secondly, we need to identify the questions which we don’t have answers for and be open to new possibilities. Lastly, we need to accept the outcomes that we discover through the learning experience.

Even more practically, leaders who are developing leaders can take the following approach to help others be “in the question.”

- *Hold a discussion* that allows them to identify their discomfort and/or anxiety.
- Have them *write down the “hard “questions* that they would like to have answers for, *without being judgmental* about those questions. Not being able to suspend the “voice of judgment” is perhaps the most detrimental issue for being “in the question.” (The questions do not reflect incompetence—just the opposite, they reflect that there is an openness to possibility.)
- Teach them how *to look for information that they are willing to consider* in answering their questions.
- Teach them *to recognize when they have new insights* that can lead to new understandings. ~ Dr. Al Cooke [Back to Top](#)



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