



# Working Resources

Helping Companies Assess, Select, Coach and Retain Emotionally Intelligent People

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Newsletter

## A Leadership Map for the Future

*"...Keeping up, staying up and getting ahead are now more difficult than we have previously imagined. There is no turning back, but there is turning forward."* Mike Jay, [www.emergenics.com](http://www.emergenics.com).

Predictions for the future can be stimulating and challenging, especially if one is a top executive in a business enterprise attempting to make strategic decisions. Our rapidly changing global environment presents problems never before encountered. No one knows what will be required of leaders in the future, but some speculation is worthy of our attention.

Predictions from experts in their fields have not always been accurate. Here are a few examples:

In 1899 the U.S. Commissioner of Patents, Charles Duell, declared, "Everything that can be invented has been invented."

In 1905, President Grover Cleveland prophesied, "Sensible and responsible women do not want to vote."

When Fred Smith, founder of FedEx, wrote a student paper proposing an overnight delivery service, his professor wrote: "The concept is interesting and well-formed, but in order to earn better than a 'C,' the idea must be feasible."

Even Bill Gates once mused, "640K of memory ought to be enough for anybody."

New industries are in their gestational phases. Some are already well on their way to becoming established products and services. Here are a few examples:

- Micro-robotics- miniature robots built from atomic particles that could unclog arteries
- Machine translation- devices that will provide real-time translation between people conversing in different languages
- Urban underground automated distribution systems to reduce traffic congestion
- Virtual meeting rooms to eliminate business travel
- Bio-mimetic materials that will duplicate properties found in living organisms
- Machines capable of emotions, inference, and learning that will interact with human beings in entirely new ways
- Bioremediation- custom-designed organisms that will help clean up the earth's environment

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We specialize in helping companies assess, hire, coach and keep top talent; executive selection; leadership consulting; 360-degree feedback; change management; interpersonal communication skills; emotional intelligence; performance improvement; culture surveys; career development and executive coaching.

Dr. Brusman is a highly sought-after speaker and workshop leader. He leads mission, values, and vision retreats.

*"Maynard Brusman is one of the foremost coaches in the United States. He utilizes a wide variety of assessments in his work with senior executives and upper level managers, and is adept at helping his clients both develop higher levels of emotional intelligence and achieve breakthrough business results. As a senior leader in the executive coaching field, Dr. Brusman brings an exceptional level of wisdom, energy, and creativity to his work."*

Jeffrey E. Auerbach, Ph.D., President, College of Executive Coaching

He has been chosen as an expert to appear on radio and TV, MSNBC, CBS Market Watch, and in the Wall Street Journal, San Francisco Chronicle, and Fast Company magazine.

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Each of these opportunities is by nature global, with no single nation or region likely to control all the technologies and skills required to turn them into reality. Any firm wishing to become a leader will have to collaborate with and learn from leading-edge customers, technology providers, and suppliers wherever they are located (Hamel & Prahalad, *Competing for the Future*, 1994).

## How will Future Leaders be Successful?

The question remains—no matter what the product or services—how will business be conducted in the future and what will be required for leaders to succeed?

To be sure, some leadership qualities will always be important: intelligence (emotional as well as cognitive), confidence, ability to articulate and inspire a vision, ability to motivate, unfaltering optimism, perseverance, resilience, and strategic decision-making.

Recent company bankruptcies have also shown that leaders need to have moral and ethical values to make difficult and even unpopular decisions that are beneficial to stakeholders in the long term.

## The Impact of Technology

Technological advances are not only speeding up communications, but also enabling rapid input from customers, suppliers, employees and all stakeholders. Technology itself has created new challenges for leaders and for all knowledge workers wishing to succeed in their roles.

While technological advances can save considerable time and money, here are some of the challenges that they have created for us.

**1. Learning new technical skills:** Executives must continually update their skills and remain open to learning how to work with new hardware and software systems. It is no longer sufficient to depend on technical specialists. What were considered basic computer skills in the past are no longer good enough. Leaders must know how to use new devices and programs to their best advantage. This requires constant learning and keeping an open mind. What worked in the past won't work in the future.

**2. Decision-making on technical issues:** Leaders must be able to make decisions about which technological advances have importance for their organizations, which purchases to make and where to allocate resources. Without this capacity to judge the value of technical advances, they risk spending money in the wrong places.

**3. Managing time and information:** All persons, but especially leaders, will have to manage their time and information flow more efficiently, in order to be able to respond effectively and in a timely manner to new input from stakeholders. It does no good to have client input available if the organization's system cannot handle the information and respond to customer demands, complaints and requests. It does no good to have email availability among workers and managers if no one reads and responds to emails in a timely fashion. Time is not the issue here, knowledge systems and time management are.

**4. Leading virtually:** Greater capacity for instant communications opens possibilities for working with suppliers in foreign countries at lower prices than can be achieved domestically. Leaders must be able to support and coordinate virtual work teams. Working virtually is not the same as managing in person, and requires new skills. Expect to see increased use of virtual conferencing technologies.

**5. Leading diverse cultures:** Working with an expanded global environment brings challenges of communicating effectively with different cultures. In the future, leaders will be required to have unique abilities to inspire and motivate others with different perspectives, values, cultures, and religions, as well as multi-generational age groups.

**6. People development:** Leaders will have to be adept at bringing out the best in their people, who have more decision-making responsibility with customers and stakeholders in a rapid response environment. Leaders will be required to learn and use effective coaching skills.

Communicating across multi-cultural and multi-generational communities is becoming more important as a competency for leaders in the future. A lot more of managing and leading will have to be done virtually.

Only a few of the prominent business schools have begun to teach new and future leaders how to manage diverse cultures in a virtual environment. Yet this is clearly an emerging competency.

Even smaller companies will become global and be required to work in a global environment. Expect to see an increase in diversity issues arise in leadership development programs. The use of executive coaches is expected to gain priority as a primary tool for developing diversity competencies for leaders.



## Dissolving Boundaries

Leadership, simply defined, is all about bringing people together to make something happen. Effective leaders galvanize attention and get people moving forward together. However, organizations are increasingly complex. The past is no longer a map for how to do business in the future.

Leaders of the future must have an increased ability to be flexible, and open to learning. They must be able to manage the tension created by diversity and differing perspectives. They must be able to coordinate and reach consensus, while keeping the focus on common goals and values.

The global nature of business means improving our ability to work and lead across diverse cultures. Leaders must understand the different legal, political, religious, gender and generational perspectives in different regions and countries. How do their organization's products and services impact the people in the areas where they are doing business? Are the organization's employees and executives able to respond to differing needs in a flexible and rapid manner? Can leaders manage the tension that is inherent in multi-cultural environments?

For many organizations having difficulty managing cultural diversity within their own domestic offices, it will be even more challenging to meet global demands. Flexible leaders who are capable of managing diverse groups of people both domestically and throughout the world will have the competitive edge.

Alliances, partnerships, mergers, and outsourcing have all changed the way we do business. Industry boundaries are blurring. Team boundaries must be fluid in order to share information and enable better decision-making. Leaders who are adept at building relationships and leveraging partnerships will have a competitive advantage for the future. The ability to guide diverse groups to consensus by focusing on common purpose and core values will be a highly prized competency.

## Five Priorities for the Future

In *Global Leadership: the Next Generation* (Goldsmith, M., Greenberg, C. L., Robertson, A. & Hu-Chan, M.; FT Prentice Hall, 2003), more than 200 executives were selected for their high potential for future leadership from 120 international companies. The survey results reveal five key competencies for leaders in the future:

1. **Thinking globally:** Leaders will need to understand the economic, cultural, legal and political environments in which they do business. New skills and knowledge for marketing, sales and international production will be required. A global perspective is a high priority.

2. **Appreciating cultural diversity:** This competency requires more flexibility and openness than ever before. Cultural tension is a natural by-product of the global business environment and leaders will have to be adept at managing it. The ability to lead disparate groups of knowledge workers to a consensus will be crucial.

3. **Developing technological savvy:** Information and communication systems are the backbone of the global enterprise. While CEO's may not be technological experts they must make decisions about which advances to adopt and how to allocate technological investments wisely.

4. **Building partnerships and alliances:** As a result of all the reengineering, restructuring and downsizing, many activities are being outsourced. This requires an increased ability to negotiate complex alliances and manage network relationships. Joint leadership will be a key.

5. **Sharing leadership:** Sharing leadership responsibilities will be required to navigate global partnerships. Executive team leaders, keeping in mind a common vision and purpose, will collaborate to make effective decisions and strive for integration, not control.

It is important to remember that leadership is an emergent quality that is produced by the acts of many people in complex systems. The corporate culture must recognize and accept the need for leaders to get help. Leaders cannot walk on water or leap tall buildings, no matter how strong they appear to be. Executive coaches are necessary for the continuing development of leadership strengths, and will be even more so in the future.



## Who's in Charge? Nobody!

Writing about leadership in the future, Harlan Cleveland goes so far as to say that leadership will be so shared that there will be *Nobody in Charge* (John Wiley & Sons, 2002). He reasons that now, and even more so in the future:

1. Systems are so complex that no one can truly be in charge of anything significant.
2. The more people are involved in a decision, the better the chance it will be implemented.
3. Looser organizational forms are superior to controlled forms.
4. Planning must be fluid and subject to change.
5. Information must be shared rather than hoarded.

Cleveland suggests four extraordinary traits of the leader of the future:

**Physical energy:** Being able to work long hours and do a lot of homework. Today's leader cannot afford to be insulated from new, challenging or different ideas.

**Consensus management:** Decision-makers must consult or even bargain with the people who will carry out their orders. In reality, many interest groups are involved in any given real-work issue, and often the decisions need to be negotiated. Being able to lead distinct groups toward a consensus is a critical leadership skill.

**Exhilaration of choice:** A large array of choices will exhilarate, not depress an effective executive, who should be able to accept complex social management with relish.

**Joy of motion:** Good executives steer more than they drive. The momentum is already there and the executive's job is to guide it with a sensitive touch.

The leader of the future will need an integrative mind. Leaders must be comfortable working under high levels of uncertainty and near-chaos. He or she must be able to accept a leadership role without hierarchical authority. This leader will be able to take various elements of a changing world and blend them together to make sense for others. By offering this vision, the leader will be able to get people working together on a common objective. That is what being a leader is about. (Cleveland, Harlan, *Nobody in Charge!*, John Wiley & Sons, 2002).

*Reader Survey: What do you see as the most important priorities for effective leadership in the future?*

*Send your responses to Dr. Maynard Brusman, [mbrusman@workingresources.com](mailto:mbrusman@workingresources.com).*

*If you feel this article is relevant, please feel free to forward it to colleagues.*



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