Empowerment and Leadership

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In this issue, we have brought together examples of how new leaders are leading, where the models of leadership are changing, and observations from consultants on how they are supporting leadership and empowerment in government departments, schools and businesses in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Julian sets the scene in his Foreword *Leadership: the Truth and the Way* by highlighting the debate between two competing approaches to the issue of leadership and empowerment: the human resource management approach which tends to concentrate on the inherent qualities of the individual and the organisational development view that favours the emergence of leaders at all levels. We begin our journey with David Harris, Director of the City of Dubuque’s Housing and Community Development who has used AI over several years to continually improve the services to people living in the city. Darcy Simmons and Laverne Webb describe this in *Sustaining Appreciative Inquiry in Local Government: A Challenge of Leadership*. Marjorie Schiller with Kaye Chatterton, Kent Bicknell and Natalie Shell, all leaders in their different fields, reflect on how important it has been for them to move away from talking about the not for profit organisation. They expand on this in *The “For Progress” Organization: Reformulating Names, Metaphors and Models of Leadership*.

The next two articles are observations from consultants on how they are supporting leadership and empowerment. Margaret Philips sets out in *Empowerment and Leadership in a UK Government Department* how she gradually engaged even the most reluctant managers in an environment that was full of change fatigue and low morale.

Adrienne Castellon’s experience is in the field of education. In *Teachers and School Administrators Becoming More Appreciative in their Outlook* she talks about the ways she helped make this change happen.

In the next set of articles, there are examples of the processes used to develop leaders, and engage and empower people.
and Heather Bradley describe the value and impact of creative learning groups in *Leaders Growing Leaders: Using AI Every Day To Deliver America’s Dream*. Larry Bartholomew, Joy Evans Peterson and Ron Robinson in *Joining Forces for New Directions, Navy Northwest* describe the processes used to provide better customer service in an environment of diminishing resources. Dundee was confronted with a crisis in recruitment and retention of staff in social work and social care. Geof Cox talks about the benefits of bringing teams together to look at what they could do in *Discovering the benefits of flexible working with social workers in the UK*. David Gilmour, as the new leader of Castrol Marine, had to make sure the business started delivering better financial results. In *Enabling the Easy Business Transformation in Castrol*, he and Benita Sutton-Cegarra describe how they used Appreciative Inquiry with Business Process Re-engineering and Transition Planning to engage everyone in transforming the business. Finally, in *Praise and Blessing: The Function of the Leader Archetype* Gervase Bushe shows how the most important job of the archetypal good leader is to praise and bless others. He builds on the work of John Weir Perry and Robert Moore to argue that there is an archetypal basis to "good Leadership" and "bad Leadership.

We hope you enjoy these journeys as much as we have in discovering them.

*Anne Radford and Julian Rizzello*  
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**Foreword**

**Leadership: the Truth and the Way**

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I think that a lot of the current debate about the problems of leadership in organisations is characterised by a rather unproductive mismatch between two competing approaches to the issue.

The human resource management (HRM) approach to leadership development tends to concentrate effort upon individuals who have been assigned, or who aspire to, positions of authority. A recurrent concern is the extent to which leadership is an inherent quality of the individual, or whether it can be learned, with the second possibility currently in greater favour. The organisation presents opportunities for people in authority to develop their leadership competencies, behaviours and skills and subsequently demands that they demonstrate these in a satisfactory manner. The underlying philosophy is that people at the top make the difference: they bring others together, fire them with a vision and point them at the work to be done. A strong personality – that directs clearly and unambiguously, models required behaviour and inspires others – is highly prized.

At present, the HRM approach has a great deal of credence in the public sector. The attractiveness lies in the belief that the “right” person will deliver: they will open the door of organisational possibility because they embody both the key and the push to move forward.