

MAKE STRATEGY HAPPEN
MiL DAYS 2009

Interdependent Leadership Cultures

– What leaders do together

Charles J. Palus



Interdependent Leadership Cultures

– What leaders do together

Charles J. Palus



Our research shows that leaders are bound together in distinct leadership cultures, of which there are three broad types: dependent, independent, and interdependent. In this session, we will explore how to diagnose and understand leadership cultures and how to move toward interdependence, based on case examples from our work, including Volvo Logistics as represented here at MiL Days by Åke Niklasson, CEO.

Charles J. Palus, Ph.D., is a senior enterprise associate in Research, Innovation & Product Development at the Center for Creative Leadership, CCL. He has been widely published on leadership and is co-author of the award-winning book *The Leader's Edge: Six Creative Competencies for Navigating Complex Challenges*. Charles received his B.Sc. in chemical engineering and his Ph.D. in adult developmental psychology.

Evolving Interdependent Leadership Cultures

Charles J. Palus¹

Center for Creative Leadership

January 2009

Submitted for MiL Day 2009

This article has two sections. The first introduces and illustrates our ideas about leadership culture and interdependence. The second introduces the prototype of a toolkit for starting to engage and evolve your own leadership culture.

Section 1: Introducing leadership culture and the evolution to interdependence

Just as we can no longer fix today's sophisticated car with a single tool, we cannot solve today's complex organizational problems with a single blue-chip leader. Yet in times of intense challenge and adversity, we tend to look to a leader "superhero" for solutions. Of course, it's easy to celebrate individual leaders. Every year more books appear by the "great men" of the business world who would have us believe they led their organization, more or less single-handedly, from crisis to profitability.

But what happens when this traditional leader formula fails? After all, it's hardly realistic to expect a single political leader—no matter how gifted—to hold all the keys to unlocking a financial crisis, eliminating terrorism, and recovering from a natural disaster. And in our organizations, it's equally naive to expect a single leader to save the company from poor economic conditions, inadequate sales growth, and eroding margins.

At the Center for Creative Leadership, we've studied how organizations have evolved to deal effectively with increasing complexity in their environments. These organizations demonstrate new leadership practices that:

- ***leverage social processes*** to take advantage of the vast knowledge and experiences residing in collaborative networks;
- ***promote an environment of mutual inquiry and learning***; and
- ***support and reward employees*** to work effectively across organizational boundaries.

¹ The research basis for this paper is the work of Wilfred H. Drath, Richard L. Hughes, Cynthia D. McCauley, John B. McGuire, Patricia M. G. O'Connor, Charles J. Palus, Gary Rhodes, and Ellen Van Velsor. Special thanks to Ron Rabin and Kris Downing for advancing the practices.

When we expand our mindset to include leadership as *not only* the task of the individual, but as the combined actions produced by *all* the organization's members to ensure ideal direction, alignment, and commitment, we're beginning to make an important shift. Holding this expansive view of leadership necessitates a purposeful approach to organizational culture: first in understanding it, and then in evolving the culture so that it becomes the prime lever for organizational success.

With this focus on cultural systems and processes, what then is the job of the individual leader? Is a leader's role minimized in the organization of the future? Quite the contrary. This new approach to leadership highlights the importance of organizational culture. Senior leaders, leaders at all levels, and even followers and the ways they engage play critical roles in defining that culture—its assumptions, beliefs, values, and practices. The environment they are instrumental in creating is largely responsible for ensuring the organization's success.

Consider one of the organizations we've studied, Abrasive Technologies Inc. (ATI), which manufactures and markets diamond-coated tools for high-performance machining applications. Originally ATI was a traditional manufacturing operation using a dependent leadership approach involving the application of expert solutions, a strict division of labor, and top-down authority. Then, in 1998, CEO Butch Peterman looked at his increasingly competitive markets, and at the inflexibility and inefficiency of ATI's operations, and decided that ATI needed to improve. First he tried re-engineering core processes. But he and his colleagues soon found that changes in technical systems and operating structures were not enough. Beliefs and values, some deeply held, had to change as well—including his own. There ensued a doggedly intentional effort at changing the culture of the organization and developing shared ways of producing direction, alignment, and commitment.

Peterman began to read about various theories of organizing in the manufacturing industry, to search for a vision and structure for a new kind of organization. One book he read described how to organize around work processes rather than through the traditional hierarchy of departments and functions. He decided that he would reinvent the organization along these process-centered lines. This "process-centered" organization called for the end of traditional supervisory and managerial roles. New, non-titled roles were created around tasks to be performed. All employees were assigned a process, and each process had a continual-improvement process engineer and coach to assist them with the work and their development. Individuals were no longer thought of as employees but as associates with full responsibility for managing themselves and their work in collaboration with the process coach and other process members. Perhaps the most challenging change was for associates to work for the customer through the value-chain process rather than to work for a traditional supervisor.

Today, processes are team-oriented at ATI. Control is more widely shared. Coaches have replaced supervisors. Cross-training and role flexibility is the norm. Differences are aired in order to find the best solutions. Workers are recruited based on fit to this new culture rather than on the skill set they bring. Operating manuals have shrunk from fat volumes to a few pages. Turnover is way down, and productivity is way up. Response time for special orders is a fraction of what it was.

Three Leadership Cultures

As part of CCL's GOLD (Global Organizational Leadership Development) practice, we've studied the leadership culture and practices of many successful organizations.

Rather than analyze the actions of individual leaders in isolation, we view leadership as a fundamentally social process that produces direction, alignment, and commitment among those who share work (e.g., teams, workgroups, business units, etc., all the way up to the entire organization). Three aspects of this social process are of particular interest to us:

- **Leaders:** the individuals actively creating or guiding the production of direction, alignment, and commitment.
- **Leadership practices:** the actions and routines intentionally deployed in the organization (or in certain subgroups) to create the leadership outcomes of shared direction, alignment, and commitment.
- **Leadership beliefs:** the taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs, and values widely shared in the organization (or in certain subgroups) that determine and justify the leadership practices.

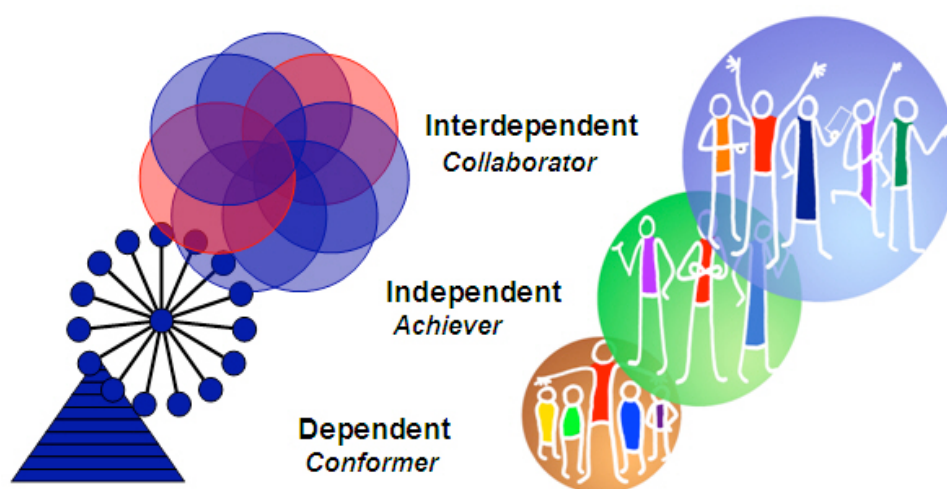
Leadership culture then is the mutually reinforcing “web” of these beliefs and practices, as they are held, tested, and evolved over time in an organization or other community. Notice that followers as well as leaders are participants in the leadership culture, though with different roles that vary dramatically depending on the type of culture.

Leadership culture is an especially powerful force: individual leaders or practices which contradict the prevalent culture are often doomed to failure. But leadership cultures can evolve. These more evolved forms of beliefs and practices are well-suited to our increasingly complex, global, and interdependent world. The good news from our research is that leaders working together can intentionally take their organizations on a path of positive cultural evolution, even transformation, and become immensely more effective in strategic execution.

Leadership cultures can be broadly characterized as ***dependent, independent, or interdependent***:

- ***Dependent leadership cultures*** are characterized by the assumption that only people in positions of authority are responsible for leadership. This assumption may lead to organizations that emphasize top-down control and deference to authority. In general, dependent cultures can be thought of as “conformer” cultures. Other characteristics associated with dependent cultures are: concentration of decision-making authority in a few senior positions, seniority and position levels as an important source of status, a conservative approach to change, an emphasis on keeping things running smoothly, and the tendency to publicly smooth-over mistakes.

- ***Independent leadership cultures*** are characterized by the assumption that leadership emerges as needed from a variety of individuals based on knowledge and expertise. This assumption may lead to decentralized decision-making, high demand for individual responsibility, strong reliance on experts and expertise, and competition among experts. In general, independent cultures can be thought of as “achiever” cultures. Other characteristics associated with independent cultures include: individual performance as an important source of success and status, an emphasis on taking calculated risks, open disagreement, and independent actions within functions or workgroups.
- ***Interdependent leadership cultures*** are broadly characterized by the assumption that leadership is a collective activity that requires mutual inquiry and learning. This assumption may lead to the widespread use of dialogue, collaboration, horizontal networks, valuing of differences, and a focus on learning. In general, interdependent cultures can be thought of as “collaborative” cultures. Other characteristics associated with interdependent cultures include: the ability to work effectively across organizational boundaries, openness and candor, multi-faceted standards of success, and synergies being sought across the whole enterprise.



Organizations tend to evolve along a path, from predominantly dependent, to predominantly independent, to interdependent. Each of these forms transcends and includes the beliefs of the prior culture as special cases within the new order. This path has much variety and many exceptions; some organizations are a mix of these forms; some regress. We observe that interdependent perspectives have been emerging in organizations in recent years commensurate with the rise of globalization and information networks, and conditions are becoming more favorable for their continuing emergence and success.

Volvo Logistics and the MiL Institute

For example, one of our case studies is Volvo Logistics, a multinational company with a strategy of becoming globally integrated across functions and regions. Their vision is “One Company, We Deliver.” To be one company is to not be fragmented among regions, but to become one system, one identity, one united force, one company. An interdependent leadership culture is the necessary and desired complement to this breadth and scale of operational integration. Yet these newer interdependent beliefs and practices themselves take time to develop. All change leadership efforts take place over a long horizon of human development. The important question becomes, How does the culture shift and sustain new, more interdependent habits and beliefs, in the long run?

A key lever for the necessary changes in the leadership culture at Volvo Logistics has been the *Global Leadership Program* (GLP). GLP is a leadership program for global managers, started in 2005 and continuing since then, using the Action Reflection Learning (ARL) designs and methods of the MiL Institute (Rimanoczy & Turner, 2008; Rohlin, Billing, Lindberg, & Wickelgren, 2002). A key objective of the program is to create new and better ways of working together, effectively and creatively, on strategic issues facing the company. The result has been a global network of more mature leaders with new-found depths of relationships bridging across differences in regions, cultures, nationalities and generations. In the words of GLP participants:

“The point of GLP was to embrace cultures, different cultures, to understand them, and to work forward that way. It’s a much better way to work, and at the end of the day you get better results. It’s a concept of ‘one plus one equals three.’ Through GLP we’ve now developed this group that’s very, very open. We can disagree without it being a conflict.”

Let’s consider for a moment this increasingly common vision for organizations, especially global ones, the vision of being “one company.” Different leadership cultures may understand this vision in very different ways. At Volvo Logistics one GLP leader described it as “one plus one equals three.” But as we look at all the cases in our research (not just Volvo), we also encounter less mature ways of thinking about one-company-ness and interdependence—a person might see it as a threat, for example, and as having to give up power and authority. These views are natural and expected, encountered in any effort at growth and change. It’s the underlying reason for organization-wide leadership development initiatives. All of us in fact have this need for sufficient headroom so we can think more complexly, with “bigger minds.”

The next table shows in general (not just for Volvo Logistics) how people at the different levels of leadership logic might grasp these challenging ideas of “being one company,” with “interdependence.” Long-term leadership development must engage these different views while offering a way “up” to more truly interdependent thinking and acting.

Individual Leader Action Logic Rooke & Torbert, 2005	Leadership Culture	From this logic, “one company” or “interdependence” may mean ...
Opportunist	<p style="text-align: center;">DEPENDENT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">INDEPENDENT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">INTERDEPENDENT</p>	A top management command that either helps me get what I want or blocks me from getting what I want
Conformer		The glue that holds us together and makes us one (like a family unit)
Expert		A norm or rule from top management that all processes be carried out by the same rules everywhere in the system; a constraint on the best use of my expertise
Achiever		To organize and operate a complex system efficiently and effectively with negotiations among strong leaders
Freethinker		A unifying strategy across many valid and useful points of view; which, to be effective, must also be enacted and adapted locally and personally
Strategist		A condition in which potentially independent (and even opposed) elements interact to form an integrated but still adaptable organization
Transformer		Integration is part of a larger flux and flow of the organization within society; highlights mutuality and connectedness in the on-going dance of integration and differentiation

Dialogue by “putting it in the middle”

Cultures don’t change overnight. And even a CEO can’t transform an organization’s leadership culture single-handedly. It takes repeated, collective behavior: what we referred to earlier as *leadership practices*. These are behaviors and activities among people with shared work that are intentionally aimed at producing common direction,

alignment, and commitment. Leadership practices may be specific and formalized, or implicit and understood.

Consider the case of Lenoir Memorial Hospital (LMH), a regional health care provider in rural North Carolina, USA, faced with increasing competition, a changing demographic, and waves of new technologies. However, they were limited by their largely dependent culture, based in conformance to rules and regulations, with a steep management hierarchy. Some sub-cultures has developed more independent mindsets: doctors, nursing, and hospital operations all had their own sets of right answers, but with none of them really understanding the others.

As part of their effort to evolve their leadership culture toward interdependence, Lenoir began a leadership practice for dialogue and decision-making called “putting it in the middle.” The “it” may be any issue in which there are strong differences or conflict. The “middle” is kind of a mutual exploration of the differing perspectives. The issue is temporarily (at least) owned by the group instead of by any single owner or advocate. Conversation in this sort of dialogue is rich with questions, observations, and non-judgmental exploration. Participants experience the expanded headroom for having more than one right answer, and they learn from each other how to combine those answers for more effective decisions.

Putting it in the middle worked so well in addressing shared challenges that the hospital created a variety of cross-functional committees based in dialogue. Notable successes were achieved on challenges including infection control, medication management, tobacco policy, and the design of a next-generation critical care unit. The senior team works on their own cross-functional teaming skills—importantly, they were the first group to test and model interdependent beliefs and practices. As a result of these combined efforts and the resultant culture shift, key metrics have steadily improved on quality, safety, patient satisfaction, employee turnover, and financial viability. For example, the Patient Safety Committee, in the words of one of the members:

... would have been just one more committee, playing it safe, and everybody deferring to who’s in charge. Instead we tried collaborating. Now, people from different functions trade the chairman role. Everybody owns all the problems, there are no priority silos. Conflict is okay now. We often ask ourselves “Is there more than one right answer?”—that works! ... This involvement in the culture goes all the way down into the nurses assistants and the security group. Everyone who comes in contact with patients is a part of this learning and collaboration about how to improve safety. The new leadership culture goes way beyond the management ranks.

“No single right way” and the power of hubs

Resources for Human Development (RHD) is a non-profit organization based in Philadelphia with over 150 programs and more than 4000 employees in twelve states.

RHD partners with government, foundations, corporations and other agencies to provide health and social services in a variety of challenging public contexts.

Interdependent practices at RHD are based on a consistently applied set of assumptions and values that all employees buy into, summarized in a single document called the “Bill of Rights.” The Bill of Rights is used as the reference point for all matters of enculturation (e.g., employee orientation, training) and discernment (e.g., conflict resolution, complex decision making). In distilled form, these assumptions and values are summarized as: *People are basically good and trustworthy. The path between here and there is not singular, but multiple. Welcome diversity. There is no single right way.* The intended, and often realized, result of these values is collaboration among multiple strong (“right”) and sometimes conflicting perspectives and paths. This type of values-based collaboration is seen as the engine of creativity and emergent strategic directions for the corporation.

RHD has leadership practices for navigating the tension between organizational centralization and decentralization. The rule of thumb, “Decentralize what you can, centralize what you must” favors decentralization while acknowledging that some centralization in crucial areas is required.

It is noteworthy that what is often centralized in organizations – the authority of the management team to make strategic decisions – is deliberately decentralized in RHD. Corporate strategy is developed throughout the organization, with senior management participating rather than driving the process. Senior managers have workspaces without walls in the common area with all the other workspaces. Once a month, the weekly senior management team meeting becomes open to anyone in the organization and becomes a special forum known as the RHD Council Meeting. On alternative months, this meeting becomes the Extended Management Meeting, open to all people with corporate management responsibilities.

It is typical at RHD for various kinds of networks and coalitions to form dynamically among otherwise autonomous actors in response to felt needs. For example, the Units Directors Network is a voluntary, regular, self-managed forum for directors of the program units, for purposes including mutual support and exploring opportunities for alignment and direction among otherwise autonomous units. Such emergent networks and coalitions then tend to garner modest funding and other resources from RHD depending on need and results.

A key approach that RHD uses to maintain equilibrium between centralization and decentralization is organizing by “hubs”. Hubs are administrative groupings of several units. Their main function is to centrally coordinate fiscal oversight. Hubs also coordinate other support and communications activities needing a central channel. The current hub structure is meant to approximate the smallness and intimacy of relationships and diversity of units within a tightly-knit community, as experienced in the early days of RHD when the scale of work was still relatively small and local. Hubs are intentionally diverse in combining units from across several disciplines. This combination of

smallness, intimacy, and diversity is deliberately valued and cultivated as a way of producing transformative learning across narrower perspectives in order to foster creative solutions for emergent consumer needs. This practice is coupled to the belief that homogenization of viewpoints within narrow specialties runs the risk of stifling creativity and adaptation.

Dealing with conflict

Openness and candor are characteristic of interdependent organizations. In fact, some of the more distinctive leadership practices we've seen have evolved in response to the need for difficult conversations within a collaborative culture.

At ATI, the diamond tools company we discussed earlier, differences and interpersonal conflicts within and across process teams are the responsibility of the process teams to deal with. In the process-centered organization there are no supervisors in a traditional sense from whom to seek conflict resolution. Coaches play a critical role. As one example, a coach described a problem he'd dealt with recently in the machining process. A relatively new hire had shown dependability problems (showing up late, not showing up). The process team called attention to this individual's behavior, noting that his behavior was adversely affecting the process and the team (and machining teams on other shifts as well). The process engineer and coach met with the individual, and the team members collectively confronted the individual. Despite this, the individual continued to show deficient behavior and was let go on the recommendation of the process team. But the problem was identified by the team as a whole, with the focus being the adverse impact on the team's performance.

At RHD, practically every meeting can serve as a forum for airing difference and practicing respectful dissent. Formal support is in place for escalated conflict, such as the Citizen's Advocate role, in which advocates in each unit are trained to mediate worker grievances with management from a RHD-values perspective. RHD uses the phrase (and lapel button) "question authority" to stand for a strongly-held principle: the leveling of authority (particularly with respect to its potential abuses) within the organization. The authority of the CEO and the senior team is open to questions and challenges from literally anyone in the organization. Questioning authority is seen not as an act that produces conflict, but that surfaces differences and produces dialogue.

Interactions at RHD tend to be open, peer-like, and inclusive. There are few space dividers in the open floor plan of the home office. Meetings are "circle oriented" and dialogical, with open agendas. Facilitators for meetings are always available as needed. Emergent consensus is the goal. The principle of "role" is subordinate to the principle of "equality." This supports fluidity of relationships across boundaries and the softening of hierarchy. Interdependence is thus made possible when strong, equal, independent people are able to freely collaborate without the distorting effects of strong hierarchy and rigid roles.

Developing interdependent leadership

The leaders we spoke with were very clear about the challenges they've faced in the evolution toward interdependent leadership beliefs and practices. They have often taken incremental (“we made little changes toward the culture we wanted”) and experimental (“we began experimenting with self-directed work groups”) approaches that allowed them to learn along the way. Gains were seen as fragile with the possibility of reverting to previous practices ever present (“you have to continue to fight for the interdependent aspects”). Among these organizations, interdependence is still largely an aspiration. No one thought they were there yet.

Some leadership practices were clearly aimed at moving people from dependence to independence. For example, ATI got rid of time clocks and provided attendance guidelines to employees, who were then personally responsible for managing their time on the job. In general, the organizations encourage employees to own their own work and to get things accomplished through influence rather than relying primarily on directives from individuals with formal authority. More independent individuals are better equipped to work effectively in peer contexts where the normal leader-follower roles often don't exist—contexts such as self-managed teams, cross-functional project work, and communities of practice.

Most of the organizations were deliberate about forming or maintaining a culture based on clearly articulated values. Values served as “a common guide,” “the glue that keeps us all on the same page.” Some values we heard frequently among interdependent organizations (or those on the path to interdependence) included the following:

- Creating good places to work: places where people are involved, engaged, learning, doing interesting work, being treated well by others
- Social justice: serving people whom others won't serve, improving the lives of people in difficult circumstances, standing up for those who haven't been given a voice
- Holism: treating people as whole people (mind, body, and spirit), taking a systems view of problems, working with the whole enterprise in mind.

Despite the progressive nature of these organizations, interdependent cultural beliefs and practices were often not widespread. Rather, we observed dependent, independent, and interdependent cultures and leadership practices existing simultaneously. However, in many cases the interdependent leadership beliefs and practices appear newer and more experimental—a change from how things had been done in the past. There seems to be an element of pragmatism about these practices; they are used as tools when necessary to deal more effectively with some tension or challenge in the organization. They also seem to be crafted primarily at the top of organizations—which is not surprising given that senior management is often responsible for dealing with major tensions or challenges, and they have greater authority for crafting responses. Although crafted at the top, new practices can serve as a stimulus for adoption of new behaviors and the evolution of beliefs throughout the organization.

So, what steps can individual leaders take to foster interdependence in their organizations?

Senior management can be a catalyst for organizational development by:

- Developing the capability as an executive team to operate from an interdependent perspective
- Designing organizational structures that encourage interaction across the enterprise, minimizes hierarchical differentiation, and engages organizational tensions
- Supporting those structures with planning processes and lateral coordination mechanisms that allow for direct collaboration across boundaries and that encourage joint reflection on and integration of multiple perspectives (without coordination from above)
- Naming organizational tensions (e.g., local-system, centralization-decentralization, multiple stakeholders) and engaging others in holding those tensions
- Articulating strong values and norms about experimentation, collaboration, systems thinking, equality, authority, and social responsibility
- Providing systemic, long-term developmental processes that enhances the organization's capacity to make use of interdependent practices

The “superheroes” of these organizations were not leaders who had all the answers or ruled by fiat. Rather, they used their power and influence to create the right environment for organizational change—often going against the grain of the standards of the industry as well as the prevalent leadership culture. Their decisions were based on a shared belief (even if only among the senior team) that a different approach was not just an option, but an imperative. After all, in the world of growing complexity and economic turmoil faced by today's multi-national organizations, the only alternative to evolution is extinction.

Section 2: A starter toolkit for evolving your leadership culture

Culture can be difficult to talk about, if the subject is your shared culture in an organization. All kinds of “undiscussables” and “sacred cows” come with this mutual exploration. Recognizing this, we have developed tools to help people build trust and have productive dialogue around seeing, naming, and evolving their leadership culture. These tools are prototypes, and we invite testing and feedback from our peers in the field of leadership development.

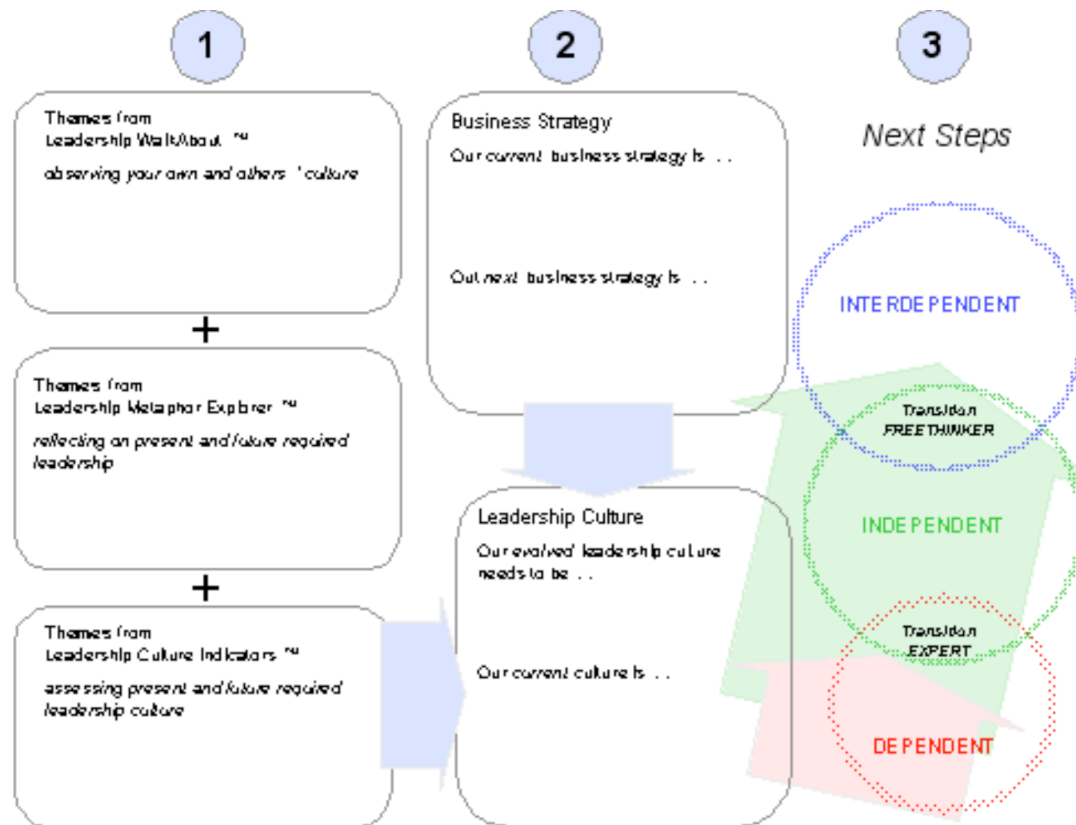
These three leadership culture tools are meant to be used either one at a time or in this order.

- Leadership Walkabout™
- Leadership Metaphor Explorer™
- Leadership Culture Indicators™

As the result of using this toolkit participants:

- Learn about the leadership culture they share now
- Understand how the current leadership culture enables or hinders the business strategy
- Articulate the leadership they want and need in the future
- Begin to discuss and begin to resolve differences in perspectives and assumptions among the participants regarding leadership, organizational culture, and the business strategy
- Begin to plan to close the gaps in where they are now with their culture vs. where they need to be from a strategic point of view
- Be able to more effectively participate in intentional organizational learning and strategic change

The graphic below is a three-step workspace for integrating the themes and insights from the three tools.



The logic of these three particular tools in sequence is based on David Kolb and Bernice McCarthy’s cycle of experiential learning. Thus we start with tangible first-hand sensations and perceptions derived from actually walking around and “touching” the culture, starting with its physical presence (Leadership Walkabout). The next step is to discern how leadership works in the culture, and what kind of leadership might be needed in the future. The use of Leadership Metaphor Explorer in this step supports the beneficial “right brain” processing of these sometimes tricky conversations through the use of metaphors and drawings. Both of the first two tools are especially meant to support trust building and dialogue, allowing the exploration to deepen and intensify. Finally, Leadership Culture Indicators is a more analytical and “left brain” tool for specifying exact dimensions for the desired evolution.

Let me give a bit more detail about each tool, enough to spur thinking about how these might be adapted and designed into a strategy session, senior team meeting, retreat, conference, leadership development program and so on.

Leadership Walkabout

The Leadership Walkabout is a structured yet flexible exercise in which the participants literally “walk about” the physical space of an organization. The immediate task is to pay attention carefully, with certain perspectives and questions in mind. The overall task is to

learn something both deep and useful about the leadership culture being observed. The conversations and ensuing dialogues are especially valuable to leaders considering what's next for the leadership culture as fit to the business strategy and mission of the organization. Of course it can be valuable to walkabout several organizations besides one's own—to aspire or to avoid—and compare them.

Walkabout participants are coached in *How to Observe* as follows:

There are three ways to pay attention during the Walkabout:

- **First person.** Your subjective, personal sensations and impressions, emotional reactions and intuitions, in your own style. You are *yourself*, taking it all in.
- **Second person.** Interpersonal interactions and shared meaning making. Talk with *others*, including people in the organization and others on the Walkabout.
- **Third person.** The material facts. The observable data. Try to be an accurate *eyewitness*.

Walk around, according to your plan. *Depart* from your plan. *Stop* and spend some time with what you find—activities, artifacts, people, noises, smells *Listen*. *Take notes* in the worksheet below or in your journal.

Walkabout participants are coached in *What to Observe* as follows:

Pay attention to:

- **Physical Environment:** facilities, spaces, design, histories, work flow, human factors, customers, artifacts, art, outside.
- **Beliefs & Meaning:** language, mission, vision, values, spirit, rules, norms, media, meaning.
- **Practices & Behaviors:** interactions, change, learning, innovation, creativity, mistakes, organization, cooperation, sub-cultures, congruence with values.

Here are a few of the “starter questions” offered to facilitators of the ensuing small and large group dialogues:

- What did you see?
- What surprised you? What seems familiar? Unfamiliar? What's mysterious? What stands out?
- How does the physical environment make you feel? How is it designed? Is the design intentional? Does the physical environment support, or detract, from the work of the organization? How? What else did you notice?

Leadership Metaphor Explorer

Leadership Metaphor Explorer (LME) is a deck of 80 cards, each with a metaphor for leadership in the form of a drawing and a label. The cards are designed to cover the range of dependent, independent, and interdependent levels of leadership. The LME is a flexible tool, and in this sequence is designed to help people conduct reflection and dialogue on their *current* leadership culture, as well as their *future* desired culture. It is also effective in helping people look at their own personal style of being a leader, and how that might be evolving. A description of LME with all the cards in digital form can be found at <http://lmecl.blogspot.com/>.

This is card number 11 for example—



© 2008 Center for Creative Leadership. Bruce Flye, artist. LMEcol.blogspot.com

Leadership Culture Indicators

Leadership Culture Indicators (LCI) is a “quick” survey tool designed to be used in face settings with (typically) senior teams or other advanced leadership groups. Participants rate their current and future desired leadership culture according to 20 indicators in the categories *Systems*, *Identity*, and *Learning*. Results indicate proportions of the three levels of dependent, independent, and interdependent leadership culture. The ensuing dialogue helps leaders focus on particular areas of concern, and the critical few areas for culture evolution efforts.

<i>In our organization</i> ... SYSTEMS			
1. Information	Information is on a “right-to-know” basis Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>	Information is on a “want-to-know” basis Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>	Information is on a “need-to-know” basis Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>
2. Scope	Organizational, global, social awareness Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>	Group, team, regional awareness Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>	Task awareness Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>

3. Talent	Talent management for strategic success and future culture Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>	Talent management for market performance and short term succession Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>	Talent management for current technical mastery Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>
4. Hierarchy	Collaboration within and across boundaries Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>	Reliance on my own and others' mastery Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>	Leaders direct us from the top Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>
5. Leadership	Leadership as an alliance of the whole organization Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>	Leadership as goal achievement Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>	Leadership as command and control Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>
6. Systems	Engage interrelated operational and human systems Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>	Engage relationships within and between systems Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>	Engage parts of systems Now <input type="radio"/> Future <input type="radio"/>
CONTINUED ...			

Scoring & Reflection

- Count the number of check marks in each column for each of the categories (colored cells in the table below). Write the number of check marks for each colored cell.
- Reflect on the following questions. Make notes in your journal in preparation for a group conversation.
 - What kind of culture do you have now in the organization?
 - What kind of culture will be required in the future?
 - Are there any differences among the categories of Systems, Identity, and Learning?
 - Which individual indicators stand out for you as especially important?

	Left column	Middle column	Right column
SYSTEMS (1-6)			
Now			
Future			
IDENTITY (7-13)			
Now			
Future			
LEARNING (14-20)			
Now			
Future			
TOTAL (1-20)			
Now			
Future			
<i>Indicates leadership culture at the level of ...</i>	<i>Interdependent</i>	<i>Independent</i>	<i>Dependent</i>

References

The research and practices in this article are based in the following reports:

- Drath, W.H., McCauley, C., Palus, C.J., Van Velsor, E., O'Connor, P.M.G., McGuire, J.B. (2008). Direction, alignment, commitment: Toward a more integrative ontology of leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*. 19:635-653.
- Drath, W. (2001). *The Deep Blue Sea: Rethinking the Source of Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Drath, W. (2003). Leading together: Complex challenges require a new approach. *Leadership in Action*, 23(1), 3-7.
- Drath, W. & Palus, C.J. (1994). *Making Common Sense: Leadership as Meaning-Making in a Community of Practice*. Greensboro NC: Center for Creative Leadership.
- McGuire, J.B., Rhodes, G. (2009). *Transforming Your Leadership Culture*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- McGuire, J.B., Rhodes, G., & Palus, C.J. (2008). Inside out: Transforming your leadership culture. *Leadership in Action*, 27(6), 3-7.
- McCauley, C.D., Palus, C.J., Drath W., Hughes, R.L., McGuire, J.B, O'Connor, P.M.G., & Van Velsor, E. (2008). *Interdependent leadership in organizations: Evidence from six case studies*. CCL Research Report no. 190. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.
- Palus, C.J., Drath W. & McGuire, J.B. (2009, in preparation). Developing an interdependent leadership culture. In C. D. McCauley, & E. Van Velsor (Eds.), *The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development, 3rd Ed.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Palus, C.J. & Drath, W.H. (1995). *Evolving leaders: A model for promoting leadership development in programs*. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.
- Rimanoczy, I. & Turner, E. (2008). *Action Reflection Learning™*. Davies Black Publishing.
- Rohlin, L., K. Billing, A. Lindberg, & M. Wickelgren (Eds.) (2002). *Earning while learning in global leadership: The Volvo MiL partnership*. Vasbyholm, Sweden: MiL Publishers AB.
- Rooke, D. & Torbert, W. (1998). Organizational transformation as a function of CEOs' developmental stage. *Organization Development Journal*. 16, 1, 11-28.

- Rooke, D. & Torbert, W. (2005). Seven transformations of leadership. *Harvard Business Review*. April, 66-77.
- Torbert, B. & Associates (2004). *Action inquiry: The secret of timely and transforming leadership*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Van Velsor, E. & McCauley, C. D. (2004). Our view of leadership development. In C. D. McCauley, & E. Van Velsor (Eds.), *The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development, 2nd Ed.* (pp. 1-22). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Charles J. Palus, Ph.D. is a senior enterprise associate in Research, Innovation & Product Development at the Center for Creative Leadership. He conducts research on interdependent leadership and creates new knowledge and innovations for the Center's organization leadership development practice. He has been widely published on leadership including articles and chapters for the *CCL Handbook of Leadership Development*, the *CCL Handbook of Coaching*, the *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, the *Consulting Psychology Journal*, and the *Change Handbook*. He is co-author of the award-winning book *The Leader's Edge: Six Creative Competencies for Navigating Complex Challenges*, and co-inventor of the *Visual Explorer™* and the *Leadership Metaphor Explorer™*, tools for facilitating creative dialogue. He has designed and facilitated numerous programs including the *Leading Creatively Program*, *Facing and Solving Complex Challenges*, and the *Action Learning Leadership Process™*. Prior to coming to CCL he was a research engineer for E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Company; an instructor and designer for the Hurricane Island Outward Bound School; and taught social psychology at Boston College. He received his B.S. degree in chemical engineering from The Pennsylvania State University and his Ph.D. degree in adult developmental psychology from Boston College.