

# Unconventional Wisdom

A BRIEF HISTORY  
OF CCL'S PIONEERING  
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION



Center for  
Creative  
Leadership

NORTH AMERICA EUROPE ASIA

[www.ccl.org](http://www.ccl.org)

SARAH GLOVER AND MEENA WILSON

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## ABOUT THE CENTER FOR CREATIVE LEADERSHIP

The Center for Creative Leadership is an internationally recognized resource for understanding and expanding the leadership capabilities of individuals and organizations. Through our open-enrollment and customized programs, publications, assessments, events and networks, we work to fulfill our mission to advance the understanding, practice and development of leadership for the benefit of society worldwide.

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## Acknowledgments

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A special note of thanks is due to Winifert Lawson-Graves and Stephen Martin, who edited this work and oversaw its production. We could not have done this without you!

# Introduction

*Unconventional Wisdom: A Brief History of CCL's Pioneering Research and Innovation* explores how far the Center for Creative Leadership has come since our groundbreaking work on leadership development first began in the early 1970s.

CCL's mission is to advance the understanding, practice and development of leadership for the benefit of society worldwide. For more than 35 years, our commitment to research and innovation has been central to fulfilling that call. We are proud of our rich history and dedicated to furthering our robust research agenda throughout the world.

In 2006, we established a research presence in Asia and Europe that will complement our longstanding work in North America. To honor this dynamic moment in our history, we have captured some of the highlights of our work in research and innovation here — to tell our story to the world and to strengthen our own commitment to the exciting work that lies ahead.

We dedicate this publication and our future research initiatives to the clients and collaborators worldwide who have continually presented us with new challenges and faithfully supported our focus on enhancing the effectiveness of individual leaders and organizations alike.

**JOHN ALEXANDER**    PRESIDENT AND CEO

**DAVID ALTMAN**    SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, RESEARCH & INNOVATION

JULY 2006

# Ideas Into Action: Research

## This is the story of research and innovation

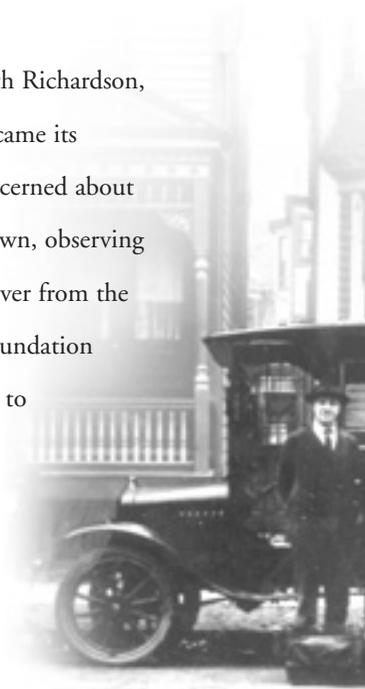
The story begins early in the twentieth century in North Carolina (U.S.A.), when Lunsford Richardson, with the help of his son H. Smith Richardson, founded a company to sell and distribute a series of home remedies he had invented as a small town pharmacist. The company, built around one of these remedies, Vicks



H. SMITH RICHARDSON

VapoRub, a salve containing menthol that relieved head and chest congestion, eventually grew into the Vicks Chemical Company.

The vision for CCL® belonged to H. Smith Richardson, who — as the family business grew — became its principal shareholder. Richardson was concerned about the sustainability of family firms like his own, observing that new leaders often failed after taking over from the previous generation. With the Vicks fortune, the Richardson family foundation began to fund scholars and behavioral scientists to study topics related to leadership and creativity.



# and Innovation at CCL at the Center for Creative Leadership.

In 1970, the Center for Creative Leadership was founded by this businessman to help meet the needs of businesses and, ultimately, all organizations. Since then, and for more than three decades, we have successfully combined a sustained investment in leadership research with an educational mission. The integration of behavioral science research and practical business application is the core of our mission and identity. Our rallying slogan is “ideas into action.” Implied in that phrase — and just as important — is our commitment to “action into ideas.”

We were named the Center for *Creative* Leadership because Richardson’s vision and philosophy centered on boldness and what he called “cross-country thinking.” Leadership, our founders believed, is about responding creatively to change, in order to avoid or overcome the usual pitfalls of leading an organization. “...*It takes*

*boldness to invest in programs of uncertain potentialities,  
but it is out of such support that some of the  
greatest discoveries have been made.”*



## Birth of the Field of Leadership Development

The Center came into being at a time when leadership development was a novel and not widely understood concept. We organized around a bold, even radical notion that leadership can be learned. A common proverb at the time was that “leaders are born, not made.” The Center’s belief that leaders can be made led to a new field of research and a new industry: management and leadership development.

## Assessment for Development: A Bold New Idea

Having accepted that leaders can be developed, the researchers at CCL needed to understand more fully how that happens. They believed that leader development is synonymous with personal development. They also deeply believed that the key to professional and personal growth is “assessment for development.”

The concept of assessment for development (as opposed to assessment for selection, promotion or performance review) was also radical at that time. A vital feature of assessment for development is keeping assessment data (feedback) confidential to the person being assessed and not sharing results with the boss or anyone else. Keeping the information private helps individuals better absorb the learning by helping them save face and also by making the feedback more honest. Assessment for development feedback is a cornerstone of the Center’s work.

## “Action Into Ideas” Begins: Programs Become a Learning Laboratory

By 1974, Center staff members decided to test their theories in the fields of leadership, creativity and experiential education by building a program around techniques they had been studying — literally putting our “ideas into action.” The new program was called the Leadership Development Program (LDP)<sup>®</sup>. Today it remains the Center’s flagship program, helping develop more than 2,000 leaders worldwide each year, for a total of nearly 47,000 since LDP was launched.

To truly understand leadership and leadership development, we knew we had to study actual leaders and managers in organizations. Inviting practicing leaders to a leadership development program provided a great laboratory to help us learn about effective leadership and transform “action into ideas.” At CCL, we deliver leadership education programs not only to serve society and our clients, but also because the programs help us access and understand real-life, practicing leaders and managers — as opposed to university students who traditionally are used as subjects for academic research.

Also in the 1970s, a small team of Center researchers, interested in how managers share information and make decisions, decided to experiment with building a simulation that would replicate a day in a manager’s work life. Funded for a time by the U.S. Office of Naval Research, and influenced by the work of noted researcher Henry Mintzberg, the goal of this project was purely research: build a simulation, run managers through it, observe them, and then collect and analyze the data.

Participants in the simulation, however, wanted to know “how did we do?” They were interested in getting feedback on the quality of their performance in the simulation. We recognized another excellent opportunity for assessment for development — and the seed for our next big success was planted. Looking Glass, Inc. (LGI) was born in 1979. To help more managers experience the simulation and learn from it, we



HONORARY SENIOR FELLOW RUSS MOXLEY POSES BESIDE A SHOP THAT SHARES THE NAME OF CCL'S FIRST BEHAVIORAL SIMULATION (CIRCA 1985).

designed a Center program around LGI called The Looking Glass Experience®. More than 30,000 managers have tried their hand at running this fictitious glass manufacturing company, through attending this program when offered by CCL or a licensee in our network of training providers.

## Pioneering 360-Degree Assessment

A large part of CCL's contribution to the field in the 1980s was the creation of 360-degree assessment tools designed specifically for leadership development. The term “360-degree assessment” refers to involving the “full circle” of people with whom an employee interacts at work: boss, peers and direct reports. One of our first 360-degree assessment instruments, SKILLSCOPE®, debuted in 1986 as part of The Looking Glass Experience. It is used to measure skills necessary for effectiveness in a management role.

Six different 360-degree assessment tools — 360 BY DESIGN®, Executive Dimensions™, Benchmarks®, Prospector®, Campbell™ Leadership Index (CLI)® and SKILLSCOPE® — have been created at CCL over the years, and we update them as new research findings or advancing technology warrant. CCL programs and clients also use other kinds of assessments developed by our researchers (e.g., self-assessment or organizational assessment).

Pioneering research and validation of 360-degree assessment tools and feedback techniques revolutionized the assessment process. Along with the creation and use



DAVID CAMPBELL, AUTHOR OF THE CAMPBELL™ DEVELOPMENT SURVEYS, TRAINS A CCL PROGRAM IN THE EARLY 1970S.

of these tools in our programs came the opportunity to establish an extensive assessment database that would be the envy of organizational researchers for years to come. (Currently, we process nearly 27,000 participant assessments each year.) This database is unique in that the data come from the largest pool of “normal” working adults ever psychologically assessed. Most psychometric assessment data typically are collected from people being treated for psychological problems.

We must note here that, at the time, this pool of “normal” adults comprised managers and executives in North American organizations, and in the 1970s and ’80s it was “normal” for white American males to be in charge. This meant that practically all of our data came from white men.

In such a homogeneous population, we saw two key differentiators affecting how individuals develop as leaders: personality and job experiences. So we focused our research and training on those two factors: personality differences and the influence of job experiences on leadership development.

## Studying the World of Senior Executives

In partnership with an array of corporate sponsors, we conducted interviews with executives to determine how they learn and grow on the job and why some executives succeed while others “derail.” The resulting book, *The Lessons of Experience* (Lexington Books, 1988), became a Center best-seller and contributed significantly to both research and practice in the human resources field. The sponsors for this line of research included Sun Company, Union Carbide Corporation, Westinghouse Electric, Armco, American Express, General Electric, Goodyear Tire and Rubber, Merrill Lynch, Nabisco Brands, PepsiCo and Pillsbury.



A CCL BEST-SELLER

(Corporate sponsors not only help us design and conduct research on occasion, but often also help us check our findings by applying them within their organizations. Because the Center’s mission involves serving society worldwide, we often collaborate with organizations that support the pursuit of learning that can and will be widely applied and shared with the public.)

The “Lessons of Experience” research made CCL professionals among the first to emphasize the critical link between on-the-job learning and leadership development. This research established that challenging work assignments and a variety of rich on-the-job experiences contribute most to executives’ development (as contrasted with formal leadership training programs). Our findings have changed the way companies and consultants approach executive development. This research has been replicated by external researchers in university environments and in the Netherlands and Japan. We now are conducting a similar study in Asia.

“Success and Derailment” research was also part of this major project. Derailment refers to the phenomenon of managers getting off track in their expected career progression through demotion or hitting a plateau. Through this research, we were able to understand what contributes to derailment and to help managers learn to avoid it. A study of the reasons for derailment in Europe was conducted later.

Two assessment tools were created from the “Lessons of Experience” and “Success and Derailment” results: Benchmarks® and the Job Challenge Profile.

Benchmarks is a 360-degree assessment-for-development instrument designed for experienced managers to help them assess 16 critical skills and perspectives related to leadership success. The Job Challenge Profile is an individual assessment designed to help managers understand and use their job assignments as valuable learning opportunities. These and other instruments are used in CCL programs and also are sold separately to consultants and training and development professionals.

## The Manager’s World Becomes More Complex, and So Does Leadership Development

The 1980s ushered in new challenges in leadership and significant change in the jobs and workplace environments of managers. Executives were looking for ways to survive a recession, and textbook notions of how managers learn and advance their careers were being challenged. More global changes were on the horizon: demographic shifts, international expansions and technology that would eventually impact the workplace in dramatic ways.

### Top Leadership Faces Unique Challenges

One of the most challenging and turbulent places to be in an organization is at the top, as the CEO. A top executive must be able to see the changes coming — from inside and outside the organization — and ensure his or her staff can prepare, respond and adapt. From their work, Center staff members believe there is a qualitative difference in the experience of being “at” the top as opposed to “near” the top, particularly in terms of one’s own development. The higher one goes up the ladder, for example, the harder it is to receive accurate developmental feedback.

In parallel to “Lessons of Experience,” we launched a study focusing on the experiences of executives at the highest levels in order to develop knowledge and services to address their development needs. This research is detailed in a CCL report, “High Hurdles: The Challenge of Executive Self-Development” (1985), and later formed the basis of our book *Beyond Ambition: How Driven Managers Can Lead Better and Live Better* (Wiley, 1991).

Besides learning about leaders in our program “laboratories,” CCL conducts research through interviews, surveys and observation. We use traditional scholarly research methods, but also more innovative approaches.

Our approach in the “High Hurdles” project, which we called “biographical action research,” included interviewing co-workers and family members of each participating executive as well as the executives themselves. We wanted to learn about the leader as a whole person, from multiple perspectives and in multiple settings. As had happened with Looking Glass, Inc., we found that our research participants were interested in what we learned about them and wished to use the feedback to develop themselves. We were able to help them while we studied them — it was a “win-win” situation. (Because of the sensitive and intensive nature of this research for the participants, we continue to protect their confidentiality and do not identify the organizations that took part.)

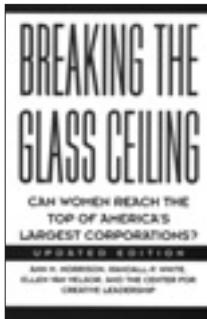
The biographical action research project produced two firsts for CCL in the mid-1980s — in fact, two firsts rolled into one. The Awareness Program for Executive Excellence (APEX)<sup>®</sup> was both our first foray into coaching and one of our initial offerings exclusively for top leaders. APEX is an individualized assessment-for-development service that follows the same data-gathering methods as the research did. The participating executive benefits from the perspectives of two CCL coaches who lead him or her through the process.

We continued to expand our offerings for top leaders with the development of our publicly offered program Leadership at the Peak<sup>®</sup>. Leadership at the Peak (LAP) has provided us with a laboratory for studying specialized topics including executive selection, fitness for leadership and executive tenure. Another new offering for top executives was Executive Dimensions<sup>®</sup>, a 360-degree assessment specifically targeted for this audience. LAP and Executive Dimensions were developed in response to our observation that LDP was serving middle- and upper-level managers and executives nicely, but the needs of very top-level participants were distinctive.

## Nontraditional Leaders Enter the Picture

One of the many ways in which we have asserted our boldness over the years has been to conduct research reflecting the changing demographics of the workforce. In the 1980s and '90s, we extended our “Lessons of Experience” study to new populations including women and African American leaders. Befitting our origin in the United States, this research responded to the growing diversity in American managerial ranks. In the last decade, we have turned our attention to younger leaders, as well as to leaders from around the globe.

CCL is noted for several landmark publications on leaders from groups traditionally underrepresented in the U.S. These came from projects done by small teams of U.S. researchers with lots of passion for their work. CCL had significant success incorporating results from these studies into our programs. The projects, with findings disseminated through a variety of channels, brought CCL notable media coverage and contributed to the field of industrial/organizational psychology.



1987

“Guidelines on Leadership Diversity” (GOLD) was a follow-up project to *Breaking the Glass Ceiling* (Addison-Wesley, 1987) which had focused on the experiences of executive women. GOLD study findings are detailed in *The New Leaders: Leadership Diversity in America* (Jossey-Bass, 1992). GOLD was supported financially by two organizations: the Pillsbury Company Foundation and the Michigan Bell Telephone Company. They funded the project for no particular reward other than wanting to provide the public with new knowledge about leadership. Many other organizations also participated in the research by investing the time and energy of their employees. Sixteen organizations participated in all: 12 from the private sector, two governmental entities and two educational institutions. Those that were willing to be publicly recognized are American Express Company, Colgate-Palmolive Company, Du Pont Company, Gannett, Motorola, a Virginia school system, a California police department and Xerox Corporation. CCL has benefited immensely from such nonproprietary investments in research that serve society.

As usual, CCL put ideas into action and developed new client offerings from this research. A leadership development program for women had already been created; soon, a program specifically for African Americans was developed. These two programs

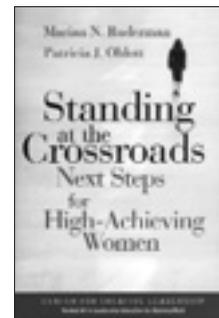
are what we call “single-identity” programs. Keeping one aspect of individuals’ identity constant (by limiting enrollment to a particular “identity”) appeals to many participants because the environment for personal learning feels more supportive. Single-identity programs also provide an opportunity to receive more accurate feedback by filtering out any bias that participants experience in their workplace and incorrectly attribute to their gender or race. *Leading in Black and White* (Jossey-Bass, 2003) was published from a study of the experiences of participants in our African-American Leadership Program.



2003

One particularly important contribution in this area was our examination of how diversity affects work team productivity. In an edited book sponsored by a grant from the American Psychological Association (*Diversity in Work Teams: Research Paradigms for a Changing Workplace*, 1996), scholars from psychology, management and sociology contributed their perspectives.

CCL is also widely cited for our research on the value of holding multiple roles outside one’s job for improving leadership effectiveness (e.g., parent, or community volunteer). Our findings contributed to work-life integration research. The study built on the CCL tradition of holistic leadership development and came out of our research on women leaders, resulting in the book *Standing at the Crossroads* (Jossey-Bass, 2002). We have had extensive interest in this project, especially from Asia, with scholars in Japan and Korea undertaking studies to replicate this work.



2002

As younger managers began to assume higher positions of leadership, we turned our attention to the leadership development needs, values and learning styles of the different generations interacting in today’s workplaces. The research project called “Emerging Leaders: Revolution, Evolution or Status Quo?” was begun in 2000 to address a lack of empirical data in this area. We expect our findings to help us design best-practice leadership development initiatives for up-and-coming managers, as well as to inform the field (*Retiring the Generation Gap: How Employees Young and Old Can Find Common Ground*, forthcoming, 2006). Organizations in

many parts of the world have helped us by asking their employees to fill out an electronic survey about learning styles and leadership. At this writing, 107 countries are represented in our research database.

Our programs were now attracting a more international mix of participants and our assessment instruments were being translated into different languages; as a result, our data were gradually becoming more international. This focus on leadership in international settings resulted in CCL publications, revisions to assessment tools, and training modules. Again, these studies were conducted by small teams focusing on global issues relative to the U.S. experience. But we began to consistently ask ourselves about any research results, “Would this be the same in other cultures?”

The growing globalization of the economy in the 1990s brought managers from all over the world into the ranks of leadership in multinational companies. In response, we launched a stream of research that looked at the experiences of expatriates, what it takes to lead globally, and cultural adaptability. The learning from each project informed the research questions for the next, culminating in our book *Success for the New Global Manager* (Jossey-Bass, 2002).



2002

## Development Is a Process, Not an Event

At CCL we often say that development occurs over time. We know that people learn and change most when they have ways to sustain the assessment, challenge and support that help them grow as leaders.

With that in mind, our program LeaderLab was designed featuring two face-to-face gatherings and the assignment of a “process advisor” to each participant for support between sessions. Rutgers University and the Emotional Intelligence Consortium declared LeaderLab one of 14 model programs in the United States for providing a means of developing emotional intelligence in the context of an actual program. Features from LeaderLab, which ran throughout the 1990s, are still included in programs today, in keeping with our belief that elements from past successes should always be saved, updated and reused in new ones.



CCL ENVISIONS A BETTER WORLD THROUGH BETTER LEADERSHIP.

## The Brave New World of Leadership Development

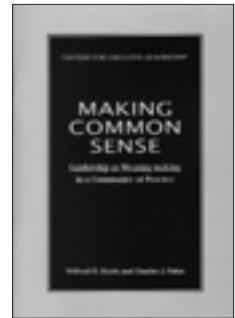
As CCL has grown from a U.S. organization to a worldwide enterprise with five campuses in Asia, Europe and North America, the boldness we pride ourselves on requires looking beyond our American experience and conveying our commitment to a global society. No longer are small teams of U.S. researchers sufficient for understanding the impact of changing demographics on leadership. To meet the needs of the future, we have begun to work with research teams that are cross-cultural in composition and to collect data with a global focus. The questions have shifted from how to help diversify the American workforce to how to lead in a richly diverse global environment.

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the world in which leaders and their organizations operate had turned increasingly volatile and uncertain. While some organizations

experienced rapid growth, others were undergoing wrenching changes such as downsizings and mergers. Forces of globalization, technological change and increased competition have swept away many conventional notions of management.

## It's Not Just Follow-the-Leader Anymore

Center faculty (as well as all of our colleagues in the burgeoning field of leadership development) had been focusing for years on leadership as more or less “what a leader does.” In that view, the quality of leadership hinges primarily on the traits, skills, style and relationships of individuals and the nature of the environment in which they find themselves. What was beginning to happen, however, was that the environments were changing in a rapid-fire way. This turbulence was making some traditional approaches and styles of leadership less effective. CCL recognized the need for a better understanding and new angle on leadership for an increasingly complex society. We wondered: “What if leadership is about *connections* and *practices* just as much as about the actions of *individual people*?” Our first thoughts on this idea were captured in the ground-breaking book *Making Common Sense: Leadership as Meaning-Making in a Community of Practice* (1994), and developed further in *The Deep Blue Sea: Rethinking the Source of Leadership* (Jossey-Bass, 2001).



1994

## Change, Complexity and Creativity

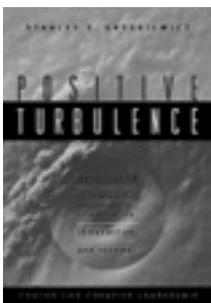
We’ve noted that our founders were interested in creativity for leadership. During the first decade of CCL’s existence, annual Creativity Weeks brought top creative minds from around the world to CCL’s headquarters in Greensboro, N.C., to share their insights. This festive fall event evolved into the Association for Managers of Innovation, a network of innovation and creativity practitioners that continues to thrive today with more than 40 members worldwide. Connections made through such networking and learning opportunities have resulted in new knowledge and understanding of the relationship between creativity and leadership.

Witnessing the changes our client organizations were going through led us early on to studies of creativity, innovation and teamwork. The turmoil they were experiencing

only grew as the years went by — and it grew faster and more drastically until everyone was saying, “change is the only constant!” So the Center’s approach to addressing change has been to take a closer look at *environments* or *contexts*, such as organizational climate, systemic methods for developing leadership talent, the evaluation of leadership development initiatives, and the application of new thinking about networks and relational leadership to concepts of leadership. As our work has evolved over the decades, we’ve been able to articulate more clearly the links between leadership, creativity, change and complexity. This is ongoing work.

Our first creativity program, Targeted Innovation, was developed from research on group creative problem-solving techniques as well as client work with innovation-minded companies such as Hallmark Cards, S.C. Johnson & Son, Pfizer, Unilever, Scandinavian Airline System, Goodyear Tire and Rubber and Mead Corporation, among others. The program was designed to help groups do creative problem solving more efficiently by adopting an appropriate creativity style and techniques to fit their particular business situation. Targeted Innovation demonstrated another core CCL belief — that creativity and innovation are manageable and predictable processes, not random or magical forces. In other words, creativity, like leadership, can be taught and developed, and one doesn’t have to be “born” with special talent.

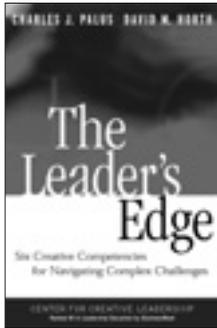
Another program, Implementing Innovation, involved intact product development teams coming to the Center with a real product to be developed; we put them through a staged process and gave them a “process coach.” Participants learned about organizational innovation processes and climate, and from this program came the KEYS® to Creativity assessment tool. This instrument measures the “creative climate” of an organization: how well it supports creative endeavor and the people engaged in it. KEYS was developed in collaboration with Dr. Teresa Amabile of the Harvard Business School, a scholar well-known for her contributions to creativity research.



Many of the Center’s ideas about innovation and organizational climates that support it were consolidated in the book *Positive Turbulence* (Jossey-Bass, 1999).

In the mid-1990s we decided to develop a Leading Creatively program and conducted research in several organizations to help us design that curriculum. We aimed to help leaders learn creative approaches to dealing with change and complexity.

1999



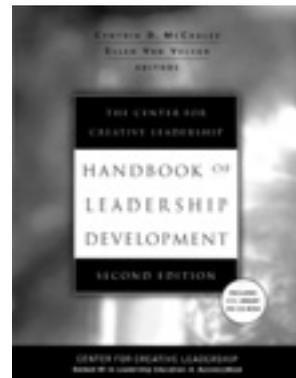
2002

The program ran for seven years; then, following our mantra of putting “ideas into action, into ideas again,” Center researchers launched a project involving the interviewing of all of the program’s participants over the years. That study’s findings resulted in a model of creative competencies for leadership described in our book *The Leader’s Edge* (Jossey-Bass, 2002). CCLs work on creativity more recently spawned a publicly offered program, Navigating Complex Challenges. In the tradition of Implementing Innovation and LeaderLab, this program offers participants the opportunity to focus on their organizations’ real-life leadership challenges during a 12-week experience that blends classroom and virtual learning.

Also during this period, our custom solutions work began to grow, and innovative new programming was developed for custom clients, many of whom were struggling with change. An example was the Center’s work with the Canadian Federal Public Service (through its management development arm, the Canadian Centre for Management Development) to help individuals better face their turbulent environment. This long-running and highly successful custom initiative was then redesigned to run in a public format and renamed Building Resilience. A related CCL fieldbook, *Leading with Authenticity in Times of Transition*, was released in 2005.

## Individuals, Teams and Groups, and Systems

By 2000, we had authoritatively described a fundamental approach to the development of individual leaders that worked! *The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development* (1998, 2004) represents the integration of years of practical experience and knowledge about how to help leaders and managers develop. Published in partnership with Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Imprint, this handbook (now in its second edition) articulates the model for leadership development we have been using for years: Assessment–Challenge–Support (ACS).



NOW IN ITS SECOND EDITION

Our research and programs had shown us that receiving feedback and experiencing job challenges are only successful

(that is, *developmental*) when leaders receive adequate support for their learning and development — from their bosses, organizations or other sources. In other words, *support* is what makes *assessment* and *challenge* developmental. But neither support alone, nor challenge or assessment alone, can give someone what they need to develop leadership ability. The right balance of A, C and S is needed.

We turned our attention to teams, conducting several studies on effective teamwork, team leadership and geographically dispersed teams; we designed public and customized programs for team leaders, intact work teams and executive teams. Our Team Effectiveness Leadership Model developed from this work and is taught in a publicly

offered program, Leadership for High-Performance Teams.



CCL RESEARCH LEADS TO PROGRAMS ON TEAM LEADERSHIP.

Now we were ready to take on the next challenge: designing effective leadership development systems. Human resources professionals have always been important constituents of the Center. We serve them directly with publications and programs that help them design organizational

interventions such as 360-degree feedback initiatives, mentoring and succession planning, coaching programs, evaluation initiatives and other ways for integrating leadership development throughout their organizations. Our most comprehensive program, Developing Leadership Talent, features best practices and insights from the various areas of CCL research. Mindful of clients' concerns about the increasing shortage of leadership talent, we continue to refine our practice related to the design of effective leadership development systems.

Still other challenges lay ahead.

## Connected Leadership

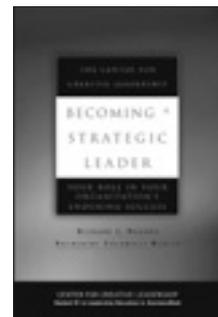
Seeing connections and similarities among several streams of CCL work — regarding teams, groups, organizational systems, complex challenges and the question “What is leadership when it’s not about what *a leader* does?” — in 2002 the Center launched a major project integrating these streams of research called “Connected Leadership.”

The project’s goal is to establish a new leadership development practice that views leadership holistically — as an inclusive and collective activity shared by many, if not all, members of the organization. This means that leadership development addresses not only individuals but the links between individuals and the systems and cultures in which they work.

The “Connected Leadership” approach helps organizations transform their leadership culture and leadership practices in the direction of greater collaboration, engagement across boundaries, dialogue and learning, embracing differences, and the direct involvement of people at all levels of the organization in leadership work. Major custom client contracts with such organizations as the U.S. Postal Service and Catholic Healthcare Partners have been secured within this new practice, and new public programs have been developed.

## Strategic Leadership

While the work described above was evolving, we were able to bring together our long history of serving senior executives with new learning about complexity and organizational practices through a study of strategic leadership. This was another example of “action into ideas” as the learning came from our client work — through the public program Developing the Strategic Leader as well as custom programs. Over approximately ten years of working with executives to develop their strategic leadership, CCL faculty noticed that the audience was changing: strategic leadership responsibilities were increasingly being pushed down into lower levels of organizations instead of residing only at the top. After analyzing the insights gained from these years of experience, CCL published a book for leaders at every level, *Becoming a Strategic Leader: Your Role in Your Organization’s Enduring Success* (Jossey-Bass, 2005). A core message is that strategy is a learning process and involves thinking, acting and influencing.



2005

## Where Are We Now?

The demand for effective leadership and systematic leadership development is more intense today than ever before. Our research and practice continue to evolve organically, in partnership with clients and colleagues in the field. We have already outlined several areas in which we are seeking conceptual breakthroughs that will accelerate our understanding and application of best-practice leadership development processes in today's world. We are simultaneously pursuing initiatives that enhance our work in the areas of coaching, evaluation, technology and bridging cultural boundaries.

### Coaching for Development

CCL programs are known for featuring individualized, one-on-one feedback (assessment) in a safe, supportive setting by a “feedback coach.” From this practice (and from APEX, mentioned before) grew the Center’s work in executive coaching. A few years ago we began offering a program to help managers be better coaches for their employees, called Coaching for Development. As is our standard practice, we research and evaluate what we teach in order to understand and teach it better. We have collected our knowledge about coaching in a book published with Jossey-Bass, *The CCL Handbook of Coaching: A Guide for the Leader Coach* (2006).



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### Demonstrating Impact through Evaluation

In the mid-1990s, the field of leadership development as a whole entered the realm of evaluation, aiming to understand and demonstrate the impact of leadership development activities. CCL was an early and significant contributor to this movement. In 1995, we created a 360-degree follow-up instrument called *REFLECTIONS*<sup>®</sup> that enables us to measure behavior change resulting from participation in our programs. Adhering to CCL's values of learning and confidentiality of data, our evaluation experts described a process for evaluating leadership development in the fieldbook *Evaluating the*

*Impact of Leadership Development: A Professional Guide* (2004). This model has been applied to evaluation projects such as the award-winning evaluation of the Bryan Leadership Development Initiative, which provided leadership development for local school leaders, teachers and administrators in North Carolina. In 2005, CCL received a grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to gather leadership development evaluation experts together in order to create the *The Handbook of Leadership Development Evaluation* (forthcoming, 2006). We continue to conduct longitudinal evaluations of our programs to answer a host of research questions related to best practices and the impact of leadership development.

## Technology Aids Development

As the world has been “getting smaller” through the increasing ubiquity of the personal computer and the advent of the Internet — highlighting the importance of collaboration and cultural knowledge — training and development professionals at the Center and across our field have begun thinking about how and where learning about leadership (and many other topics) might be accomplished. While the kinds of behavioral change in which the Center specializes are best undertaken face to face, the increased availability of technology-based tools allows more learning to occur at a distance and at a time more convenient to the learner.

Distance learning and “blended” learning (combining the virtual format with the face-to-face format) both present challenges and opportunities — for the Center and our clients. Our foray into “blended learning” design, the Xerox Emerging Leaders Program, received an Excellence in Practice Award from the American Society for Training and Development in 2001. Webinars and Web-based goal management systems are two illustrations of how we use technology to help extend the development “process” beyond the classroom “event,” in keeping with our beliefs about learning.

## Bridging Cultural Boundaries

In this increasingly interdependent and diverse world, a major leadership challenge is and will continue to be the need to create shared direction, alignment and commitment between groups of people with very different histories, perspectives, values and cultures.

The Center's Leadership across Differences (LAD) research initiative was launched in 2001 to address effective leadership processes in the face of racial, religious, gender, ethnic and cultural differences. A diverse team of CCL faculty, working in collaboration with international researchers, is collecting data in for-profit and



CCL RESEARCH HELPS LEADERS BRIDGE CULTURAL BOUNDARIES.

nonprofit organizations in 13 countries across five continents. While the participating organizations may choose to be publicly recognized later, we are protecting their confidentiality while the research is being carried out. They provide employee time for interviews and the completion of surveys.

One group of organizations, however, decided to support this research financially in exchange for participation in a "learning consortium." The consortium included Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, CARE, ConocoPhillips, GlaxoSmithKline, Mercy Corps, Swiss Re, Syngenta, Verizon, Warner Foundation, Virginia State University and the Greensboro (N.C.) Fire Department. This project is just one of the Center's initiatives also being supported by grant funding from such organizations as Merrill Lynch and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.

## Going Global

In making our research global, the Center first focused on translating our U.S. publications into other languages, then on extending our U.S. work by collecting data outside the United States. We are now ready to do new work looking at local models of leadership in other geographic regions.

To accomplish this, CCL is teaming up with institutional partners in Europe and Asia to develop new knowledge and leadership education that serves regional interests and needs. Two of our key partners in Asia are the Tata Management Training Centre in Pune, India and the Economic Development Board of Singapore. In Europe, CCL has joined a group of partner institutions to start research on the topic of leadership and corporate social responsibility. The project is an outgrowth of a research conference the Center hosted in 2005 in Brussels, Belgium.

In the long term, we plan to develop a research agenda reflecting an international perspective on key leadership and leadership development issues worldwide — some of the toughest challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We will explore these issues across diverse political, economic and social boundaries, and work to understand the connections between individual, organizational and societal transformation. We expect this agenda to involve collaborative relationships with experts from other countries. It will require many investments, including research partnerships, time frames supportive of these working relationships, staff members skilled in cross-cultural research, development of research tools suitable for cross-cultural research, and more travel funds. Our intent is to add a richer understanding of what it means to lead in today's complex multicultural environment to our initial understanding of leadership development issues in the United States.

Why are we doing all this? In short, CCL's vision is a better world through better leadership. This vision is what drives us to carry forward the bold, inventive spirit of our founders. 

## About the Authors

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