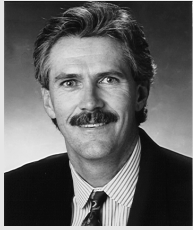


## Welcome



**Y**ou know the clichés: "It's all in the timing" and "Timing is everything." Well, timing has a lot to do with the payoff organizations receive from their investments in leadership development. Organizations provide

powerful leadership development experiences to their managers to help shape and empower the leadership that will in turn help shape the organization's culture and systems. How effectively the training develops and molds the leadership skills and perspective of these managers is affected by many factors. One of those factors, time, relates to what is happening in the lives and careers of the leaders when the training is conducted as well as to what is done within the culture of the organization before and after the training to support the learning experience.

The training functions of many organizations are judged in part on the impact they can make on the employees. Often senior management looks at leadership development training in isolation and values it solely for the content and the delivery of the training without considering what preparations and follow-through could enhance that training and make it even more successful in changing behaviors in the workplace.

This issue of *Excursions* addresses one of the important factors that help determine the effectiveness of leadership development. Attention to this factor—time—can help improve the performance of the training effort and also help strengthen recognition of the connection between leadership development and organizational culture.

Chris Musselwhite, President

## Ready Or Not, Here I Learn

*Interview and article by Randell Jones*

**E**very year, millions of managers immerse themselves in varying levels of education to improve their leadership capabilities. For example, in 1998 US companies spent on training an average 29 hours and over \$700 per employee. Some of this continuing investment goes toward helping leaders learn about themselves through assessment-based training. Through that process they are learning about their leadership strengths, their weaknesses and the role of leadership in their organizations. In many situations, the outcomes from this training are positive and rewarding, but in others the results are disappointing. That variation in outcome prompts the question: what factors influence the effectiveness of an individual's leadership development and what can be done to affect them?

While exploring the role of timing in leadership development as part of his doctoral dissertation, Chris Musselwhite determined some important findings regarding two time-related factors: readiness to learn and the transfer of learning. He found that what happens before and after the training experience substantially affects the training outcome for both the individual and the organization. His findings in 1985 seem just as relevant today and create opportunities for leaders to influence the effectiveness of their training investment by prudently choosing the timing and support techniques.

### As others see us

Musselwhite pursued a case study approach using twenty mid-level and upper level executives who had attended the assessment-based Leadership Development Program (LDP) at the Center for Creative Leadership during 1983 and 1984. The chosen subjects were managers who had some discrepancy in the feedback they received during the LDP between their own assessment and that of others regarding their leadership behavior.

The discrepancy in "self" and "other" assessments presented an opportunity for objectively exploring the gap between the two perceptions and the learning-

***"The real challenge in leadership development today is . . . making sure people are ready for the . . . training and then helping them . . . to transfer that learning into the workplace."***

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about-self that had taken place during and after the LDP. The structured interview process attempted to identify whether the participants internalized (i.e., demonstrated awareness of their role and responsibility for) or externalized (i.e., blamed others for) the discrepancy.

### Ready Or Not

Through exploring the differences in perceptions, the investigation created new knowledge about the issues around readiness-for-learning and transfer-of-knowledge. Managers' readiness (and ultimately their ability) to learn from an assessment-based leadership development training experience is significantly enhanced by considering four identified factors. Readiness to learn is enhanced when careers are in transition and lives are in crisis, when job satisfaction is decreased and organizations are in turmoil. Table 1 shows the results of the investigation for this issue.

### Bringing It All Home

If the participants internalized the feedback, they were asked additional questions regarding what they had done about the perceived discrepancy and if their efforts had been successful. This probed the extent to which the learning is transferred from the development experience to the workplace.

Some leaders see immediate opportunities to try new behaviors in their respective workplaces while others just never seem to get around to doing anything different after the training. The study revealed five criteria that affect the transfer of management development training to the workplace. The transfer is affected by the climate of the organization (i.e., culture), promotion before training, the presence of normal work routines, the availability of follow-up training and support, and personal stress. Table 2 presents and describes



these criteria.

### Lessons Learned

Reflecting on his research findings fifteen years later, Musselwhite comments, "Learning is critical to the continuing success of any leader and any organization. Certainly as client expectations, market situations and technology change, people need to change and grow was well, especially in their leadership capabilities. Effective training has a role in that learning."

"The fact is today the training function is good in the classroom," Musselwhite continues.

"Trainers have access to superb tools for assessing leadership capability and they have at hand creative simulations for helping managers to discover aspects of their leadership that may need attention. The real challenge in leadership development today is two fold: making sure people are ready for the assessment and training and then helping them after they return to the organization to transfer that learning into the workplace."

Table 1

Factors Affecting Readiness To Learn	Description of Factors
<b>Career Transitions</b>	Three key career transitions were identified: 1. Becoming a new manager 2. Transitioning from manager to executive 3. Taking over at the top
<b>Mid-life Crisis</b>	A time of serious professional and/or personal questioning. This often occurs in the early forties.
<b>Time of Decreased Job Satisfaction</b>	Decreased job satisfaction was caused by several factors including personality conflicts, dislike of present project or assignment, dislike of new policies or personal loss of challenge (i.e., "burnout").
<b>Presence of Organizational Stress</b>	Organizational stress includes organizational transitions, financial problems and organizational or job restructuring.

### Before . . .

Clearly, the first thing participants need to know before attending any leadership training are the expectations their supervisors have for what they are to gain from it. Having a clear understanding of what one is expected to do with that knowledge when one returns is critical as well. Few other approaches are as effective as a face-to-face explanation.

"What one manager is expected to do as a result of leadership training is often related to what the entire organization is attempting to do to manage and change itself," Musselwhite adds. "A survey of the organizational culture is an excellent way to reveal the strengths, issues and areas needing improvement within the organization and to help it begin fulfilling its performance potential. With this background, senior management can set training expectations and pursue developing the leadership it needs to reinforce and change elements of the organizational culture."

The Denison Organizational Culture Survey (DOCS) is a powerful tool for conducting such a cultural assessment. The Denison Leadership Development Survey (DLDS) is a coordinated assessment tool that measures leadership on the same dimensions as the DOCS and provides clear articulation of what interventions are needed to help leaders move the organization in concert with the desired

culture. Through application of DOCS and DLDS, senior leaders can carefully lay out individual expectations for those individuals undertaking development of their leadership.

**. . . And After**

“Regardless of expectations, however,” offers Musselwhite, “the challenge following training is to bring the value of that training back to the organization. Immediately following training, most participants are quite clear and committed about what they want to do. But after returning to the normal work routines, those good intentions can become muddled. Consequently less is often accomplished in terms of new behaviors than was intended. What actually helps this transfer process is having a few, clear, specific goals. That focus helps each leader to translate his or her good intentions into effective and predictable behaviors.”

GoalGetter is effective at helping managers develop specific and measurable

goals they can commit to accomplishing by specific time frames. This tool helps these managers convert intentions into actions. By following through with these managers on their specific goal progress, senior leaders are supporting and reinforcing the efforts these managers are making to bring their specific learning back to the organization. Such follow-through support is critical to the successful transfer of learning to the workplace. In these two ways—helping convert intentions and helping organizations provide follow-through support—GoalGetter helps the organization realize a meaningful return on its investment in leadership training.

**Ready, Learn, Lead**

Leadership is a critical function in every organization. For that reason, developing the important and powerful role of leadership should be undertaken with every available advantage to help managers learn and change their leadership behaviors. First, consideration should be given to the timing of the training in the

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**Table 2**

<b>Criteria Affecting Transfer of Learning</b>	<b>Impact of Criteria</b>
Organizational climate	A favorable climate included emphasis on training and development, top management support for change and new ideas, open communication and job security.
Promotion or major increase in job responsibility	Training should occur six to eight months after a promotion or increase in responsibility. This allows time to know the challenges and deficits, but before the manager is set in his/her new position.
Normal Work Routine	A period of relative predictability following the training is critical. People need to practice what they have learned. Avoid vacations or business trips immediately after the training.
Follow-up training and/or support	Time diminishes the enthusiasm and the determination of managers to make personal changes. Follow-up may be as simple as a commitment from the manager’s boss to provide support, encouragement, and reinforcement for the manager’s efforts.
<b>Personal or family stress</b>	Any personal or family stress can diminish the transfer of learning into the workplace. This is true of positive as well as negative stressors.

**What’s New at Discovery Learning?**

**On-Line Surveys**

The Denison Organizational Culture (DOCS) and Leadership Development Surveys (DLDS) are available on-line. On-line access reduces surveying turnaround time and is particularly helpful with geographically dispersed organizations. For example, Discovery Learning is currently conducting a survey for one organization operating in over 56 countries. Coming in July, Change Style Indicator and the new Decision Style Profile will be available on-line, too. Check our website [www.discoverylearning.net](http://www.discoverylearning.net) soon for previews.

**On the Edge**

Discovery Learning, Inc. and the Center for Creative Leadership have joined together to improve and repackage CCL’s innovative simulation, *Edgework*. After DLI completes revisions by January 2000, both organizations will share in ownership and marketing of this creative leadership development tool. Focused on organizational boundaries, shared goals and interdependence, *Edgework* explores the relationship between supplier and customer.

**Train-the-Trainer**

Chris Musselwhite will facilitate a Train-the-Trainer session on September 6-7 in Greensboro, NC. It will cover several DLI tools, including Paper Planes, Inc., Change Style Indicator, Denison Organizational Culture Survey, Decision Style Profile and others. Participants completing the session will receive certification in the tools covered and will receive product software and facilitator guides as part of their materials. Call 1.800.851.5118 or visit our website [www.discoverylearning.net](http://www.discoverylearning.net) for more information.

*“Excellent products and facilitation. Everything was most informative and innovative in its approach. Bravo and Bravo!”*  
 - Nancy Hall, Arthur Andersen Consulting  
 September ‘99 Train-the-Trainer Participant

## Putting the Pieces Together

Creating connections is what makes learning a powerful experience in the lives of individuals. Putting two concepts together that somehow never before seemed related produces insights that the individual can interpret and appreciate as no other can. That's why Discovery Learning's assessment tools and simulation exercises are coordinated to help produce the powerful learning that comes when individuals make for themselves connections that may have eluded them previously.

**Paper Planes, Inc. (PPI)** is a business simulation that explores the capability of people to organize and redesign a workflow system. One of the outcomes from that simulation is the knowledge that how the pieces of a system are put together makes a difference in the effectiveness of that system. In that regard, PPI is principally concerned with the structure of workflow.

However, as conflicts arise due to changes that take place in the simulated business, the participants must make decisions together. Although part of their ineffectiveness as a business—a strategic learning opportunity—is based on how they are or-

ganized in the face of these changes, part of the tension that arises is from the personality and preference differences among the participants. That's where **Change Style Indicator (CSI)** adds to the learning experience.

A presentation on Change Styles usually preceding the last redesign effort in PPI sets up an important learning opportunity. Combined with the scoring of the previously completed CSI assessment tool, the introduction of Change Styles creates insights that part of the tension in the work group is arising from differences in personalities and individuals' preferences for dealing with change, not solely from the organization of the workflow. As a result, the final redesign in the PPI simulation is usually undertaken with a different spirit and intent among the group members who are now thinking and acting more as a team.

Socrates said it best: "Nothing is so well learned as that which is discovered." By design, **Paper Planes, Inc.** and **Changes Style Indicator** work together to facilitate personal discovery and powerful learning.

*(Continued from page 3)*

life of the manager. Second, individual expectations should be clearly communicated within the context of the larger organization's ambitions. Third, following the training, a few, clear, specific goals should be set by each participant to help him or her convert intentions into changed behaviors. Fourth, follow-through support by the organization is

critical to helping bring that learning into the workplace. Attention to these four elements can help the training pay off for the organization and can make the training effort a rewarding experience for the leader as well.

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