Transforming Leadership in the Manufacturing Industry

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Introduction

The United States has a need for dedicated industrial leaders motivated to confront the challenges posed by the complex and turbulent arena in which corporations compete. The critical issues confronting the contemporary company are in marked contrast to the challenges of the 1970s and '80s. The crisis in industrial leadership is one such issue. Some observers of industrial leadership are critical of many of the men and women in power. Burns (1978) noted the level of mediocrity or degree irresponsibility of many in positions of industrial leadership. The fundamental crisis underlying mediocrity is intellectual. We fail to grasp the essence of leadership that is relevant to the modern age . . . and cannot agree even on the standards by which to measure, recruit, and reject it. Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth. Although no central concept of leadership has yet emerged . . . the richness of the research and analysis [has enabled] a breakthrough. . . . Unheralded work in humanistic psychology now makes it possible to generalize about the leadership process across cultures and time. (pp. 1-3)

The work of Burns and other critics of industrial leadership raise serious questions for the student of leadership theory. Some of the questions Burns posits are:

[1] Can we distinguish leaders from mere power holders?

[2] Can we identify forces that enable leaders to act on the basis of common, non-culture-bound needs and values that, in turn, empower leaders to demonstrate genuine moral leadership?

[3] Can we deal with these questions across polities and across time? (p. 5)

Critics such as Garner (1985) and Heilbrunn (1994) suggest that people are now less willing to assume leadership roles in companies for a number of reasons. One possible reason is that society demonstrates a distrust of leaders. In addition, leaders in today's companies face an array of competitive forces. These competitive forces include the impact of accelerated technological change, critical shortages in the technical work force, and leveraged buy-outs. There is also the popular perception that manufacturing is a diminishing sector of business in the United States. The exportation of jobs to developing nations has further complicated the scenario.

The demographics of the work force are another issue challenging industrial leadership. Social issues impact industries due to generational replacement. The younger generation expects to be well paid, but has a different mental psychological model relevant to the degree of commitment required for the pay. Many individuals entering the technical work force tend to be more independent, less formal, participate in a very active social life outside the company, and expect a pleasant work climate and environment.

These internal issues and external forces challenge the leadership in manufacturing companies. This study was executed as a learning voyage. The focus of the research was to gain insight into the leadership of today's manufacturing companies. More specifically, the focus was on the question raised by Burns (1978) as to the moral and ethical transformation of leaders.

The United States has a need for industrial leaders who are not only willing, but excited by the very complex and turbulent arena within which companies compete today. Looking back, the crises and changes of the '70s and '80s seem minor compared to some of the issues affecting our companies today. Gardner (1993) and Heilbrunn (1994) made the point that people are less willing to become leaders today, possibly because of the distrust society shows toward leaders. Leaders in today's companies are continuing to face competitive forces. In addition, the impact of trying to keep up with the fast pace of technological change, combined with serious technical work-force shortages and never knowing when an external force is going to make a bid for a company that is vulnerable, are just a few of the problems today's industrial leaders must face on a daily basis. Manufacturing, especially, as a business sector often perceived to be on its way out in the U.S., has a very complicated scenario in light of developing nations globally. Issues are surfacing on other fronts as well. As the work force changes from generation to generation, there are social issues impacting today's industries. The younger generations expect to be well paid but have different mental models about the commitment level required for that pay. These younger generations are more independent, less formal, have a desire for a very active life outside the company, and even while working require a different type of work climate and environment. These issues are sometimes as critical internally to a company as the external forces. This

study was executed primarily as a learning voyage. The research focus was on gaining insight about leaders in today's manufacturing companies, specifically moral and ethical transforming leaders.

Important Definitions

The following definitions are critical to understanding this study:

Leadership

Burns (1978) defined leadership as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations—the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations—of both leaders and followers . . . the genius of leadership lies in the manner in which leaders see and act on their own and their followers' values and motivations. (p. 19)

There are approximately 220 other definitions of leadership; most of them do not mention an ethical or moral component (Rost, 1991). Similar concepts to that of Burns include the following definitions:

Zalenik (1989): "based on a contract that binds those who lead and those who follow into the same moral, intellectual, and emotional commitment" (p. 15).

Bennis and Nanus (1997): "leaders taking charge and doing the right thing" (p. 75).

Bass (1985): "one who motivates us to do more than we originally expected to do" (p. 20).

Transforming Leadership

While studying political leaders, Burns (1978) formulated what is known as transforming leadership:

When one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. . . . Power bases are linked not as counterweights but as mutual support for [a] common purpose. . . . Transforming leadership ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both. . . . The leader takes the initiative in making the leader-led connection; it is the leader who creates the links that allow communication and exchange to take place. . . . Leaders . . . will have the major role in ultimately carrying out the combined purpose of leaders and followers . . . and address themselves to followers' wants, needs, and other motivations, as well as to their own, and thus they serve as an independent force in changing the makeup of the followers' motive base through gratifying their motives. (p. 20)

Burns (1978) further stated:

The ultimate test of moral leadership is its capacity to transcend the claims of multiplicity of everyday wants and needs and expectations, to respond to the higher levels of moral development, and to relate leadership behavior—its roles, choices, style, commitments—to a set of reasoned, relatively explicit, conscious values. (p. 46)

[The result is] a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents. (p. 4)

Transactional Leadership

Burns (1978) defined transactional leadership as being when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things. The exchange could be economic or political or psychological in nature: a swap of goods or one good for money; a trading of votes between candidate and citizen or between legislators; hospitality to another person in exchange for willingness to listen to one's troubles. Each party of the bargain is conscious of the power resources and attitudes of the other. Each person recognizes the other as a person. Their purposes are related, at least to the extent that the purposes stand within the bargaining process and can be advanced by maintaining that process. But beyond this, the relationship does not go. The bargainers have no enduring purpose that holds them together; hence, they may go their separate ways. A leadership act took place, but it was not one that binds leader and follower together in a mutual and continuing pursuit of a higher purpose. (pp. 19-20)

It is possible for a leader to engage in both transforming and transactional leadership.

Transformational Leadership

Bass (1985) modified Burns's definition of transforming leadership. He proposed that "transformational leadership augments the effects of transactional leadership on the efforts, satisfaction, and effectiveness of subordinates; for example, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Kennedy, did not shy away from being transactional as well as transformational. They were able to move the nation as well as play petty politics" (p. 53). Bass defined a transformational leader as "one who motivates us to do more than we originally expected to do" (p. 20). Inspiration and charisma are the primary constructs. Transformational leadership does not require the moral component of Burns's transforming leadership. Thus, Hitler would be considered a transformational leader. Leaders who increase follower motivation and commitment are transformational (Conto, 1993; Yukl, 1994).

However, Tichy and Devanna (1986) went further to describe transformational leadership as a hybrid form. According to them, it is not due just to charisma, but is a behavioral process capable of being learned and managed. It's a leadership process that is systematic, consisting of purposeful and organized search for changes, systematic analysis, and the capacity to move resources from areas of lesser to greater productivity . . . [to bring about] a strategic transformation. (p. viii)

SuperLeadership

Sims and Lorenz (1992) defined a new leadership construct that is based in social learning theory. The SuperLeadership theory focuses on the development of self-leaders, a process where leaders help followers to develop into leaders or self-leaders. The superleader models self-leadership behaviors by teaching/influencing followers to be responsible, competent, capable, and self-disciplined. The

ultimate result is empowerment; self-leaders are capable of functioning in self-managing teams, etc. The theory is grounded in social learning where modeling is a form of teaching and influencing. Therefore, if ethical and moral behavior is modeled, then followers become more ethical and moral as well. It seems that this construct also fits well into a genuine empowerment climate where leaders or managers are actually "giving up power" by empowering others with real power to make decisions. SuperLeadership is an extension of transforming leadership power. Power is shared between leaders and followers where systems and teams can function independently without a controlling leader (Pearce, Sims, Cox, Scully, & Ball, 1994; Yukl, 1994).

Social Learning Theory and Modeling

Bandura (1977) studied how people learn indirectly from observation or by vicarious learning. In organizational settings, behavior modeling provides an opportunity for vicarious learning whereby new patterns of behavior are acquired and existing patterns altered. Three types of model effects are possible: (a) members in an organization can learn what is acceptable behavior and then modify their own accordingly; (b) members of an organization can observe the negative or positive consequences of others' actions and what is rewarded or punished—this influences or changes their behaviors; and (c) when the behavior of members of an organization are cued, it reminds members of ethical models learned in a prior workshop and stimulates their use in solving real problems (Sims & Manz, 1982).

This psychological process results in the indirect facilitation of the learning process through indirect observation. Therefore, models in organizations can affect ethical or moral behavior changes in followers (Trevino, 1986). When leaders practice ethical and moral behavior, members learn and assume the same behavior. Also, Weiss (1977) found that followers may emulate unethical behavior if the model is perceived as successful, especially in organizations where competition is high. Several studies have found that superiors or supervisors have the most influence on ethical behavior of employees (Ford & Richardson, 1994; Posner & Schmidt, 1984). Also, the influence of peer modeling has been found influential, and peers proved to be the strongest predictor of ethical/unethical behavior and moral development of group members (Wotruba, 1990; Zey-Ferrell & Ferrell, 1992; Zey-Ferrell, Weaver, & Ferrell, 1979).

Modeling influences ethical behavior. In addition, "moral talk" can be an important method to model. Bird and Waters (1989) contend that moral expressions potentially arouse feelings and connections to moral action. As a type of modeling, moral talk can influence others when the dialogue is used to "identify problems, consider issues, advocate and criticize policies, and to justify and explain decisions" (p. 82). Moral talk brings about a memory and assists leaders and followers to reinforce and build upon "tacit as well as explicit agreements and promises . . . and connect feelings of self-worth to moral compliance" (p. 82). Therefore, it seems important that leaders who feel strongly about moral and ethical behavior engage in moral talk. Neilsen (1990) described this as "dialogic leadership" (p. 765)—verbal expressions about ethical problems and decision making. Lack of discussion about ethics is referred to as "moral muteness" (Bird & Waters, 1989).

The most critical aspect of these definitions is whether ethical and moral behavior are part of the definition. There is some debate about the moral component of Burns's (1978) definition of transforming leadership. He does not classify Hitler as a transforming leader. For example, Rost (1991) does not feel that the moral aspect should be a requirement. Burns feels that only leaders who rely on moral empowering techniques can be qualified to be positive models in organizations.

For the purposes of this study, the definition chosen to define transforming leaders was that of Burns (1978) and includes the ethical and moral components as requirements. Ciulla (1995) feels that real debates about leadership lie in the question, "What is good leadership?" not "What is leadership?" and that if ethics are ignored, one could easily trace great leaders by the quality of changes implemented (p. I). However, today there seems to be a move toward concern about moral leadership in America, although there still seems to be disparity between what leaders say they are doing and their actual behaviors (Wilson, 1993).

Leadership has been approached historically to the present from several perspectives: the trait approach, behavioral approach, situational contingency approaches, Influence theories, Reciprocal Leadership theories, Transforming Leadership theory, Transformational Leadership theory, and Followership theory. These definitions guided this study.

Although there is far less research on ethical leadership, when considering ethics and morals, it is important to realize that the two terms are used interchangeably. However, for the purposes of this study, Toffler's definition of moral is used: "relating to principles of right and wrong" or "'arising' from one's conscience or a sense of good and evil; pertaining to the discernment of good and evil; instructive of what is good or evil [bad]" (as cited in Shea, 1988, (p. 27). Ethics, for the purpose of this study, means "rules or standards that govern behaviors" (Toffler, 1986, p. 10). Therefore, morals could be viewed as the foundation for ethical procedures or behavior.

When studying moral or ethical behavior, researchers have used moral or reasoning theories, cultural relativism, moral development theories, Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development, and Gilligan's Theory on the Ethic of Care. When considering how leaders and followers engage each other toward higher moral ends, one must enter into the realm of social learning theory and modeling and then consider how modeling influences moral development and ethical behavior. Grace (1990) and Colby and Damon (1992) performed qualitative studies on constructs related to ethical

and moral leadership. One study involved the study of ethical leadership processes and leadership development of eight ethical religious and community leaders. The researchers identified four themes/factors that influenced the moral and leadership development of the study participants: family influence, critical incident, role models and mentors, and transcendent view or virtue (Grace, 1990). Colby and Damon (1992) identified 10 patterns of moral leadership. "Moral exemplar" was defined to mean one who "exemplifies some widely shared ideas of what it means to be a highly moral person, but not that the individual is morally perfect or ideal" (p. 27). These 10 patterns are as follows:

1. A sustained commitment to moral ideals or principles that include a respect for humanity.
2. A disposition to act in accord with one's moral ideals or principles, implying consistency between one's actions and intentions.
3. A tendency to be inspiring to others . . . to lead them to moral action.
4. A willingness to risk one's self-interest for the sake of one's moral values.
5. A sense of realistic humility about one's own importance relative to the world at large, implying a relative lack of concern for one's own ego.
6. A disregard for risks and their disavowal of courage.
7. A certainty of response about matters of principle.
8. An unremitting faith and positivity in the face of the most dismal circumstances.
9. A capacity to take direction, as well as social support, from the followers whom they inspire.
10. A dynamic interplay between continuity and change in their personal life histories. (Colby & Damon, 1992, p. 293)

The Study

This study was designed to examine the factors that influence the decision-making processes and actions

of transforming moral leaders. The three main theories which have constructs associated with influence, ethical behavior, and modeling are Transforming Leadership (Burns, 1978); Ethical theory (Shea, 1988; Toffler, 1986); and Social Learning theory (Bandura, 1977; Sims & Manz, 1982). These constructs and the associated theories were the foundation for this study. The researcher attempted to illuminate the way seven industrial leaders lead their lives for the purpose of better understanding transforming leaders in the U.S. manufacturing sector.

Design and Methodology

This was a qualitative study through naturalistic inquiry into the lives of transforming moral leaders. The study was designed to mirror a study performed by Nancy Lucas of the James MacGregor Burns Academy of Leadership, University of Maryland. She chose to study five political leaders and five leaders of higher education. This study focused on seven leaders (informants) in manufacturing. Interviews were the primary means of collecting data. However, other types of data were collected: vitae and demographic information; information about leaders' operational contexts through mission statements, annual reports, employee handbooks, company policies and procedures, benefits; and any leadership program or material used for training purposes. It is important to understand the difference between a qualitative and quantitative study. Qualitative studies draw on smaller samples that provide the opportunity for in-depth inquiry, while quantitative studies usually provide information from large random samples (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). Therefore, this study focused on cases with in-depth information through theory-based sampling and opportunistic sampling (Patton, 1990).

Similar to methodologies and techniques used by Lucas (1997), a nomination technique and sample based on the theories and constructs (mentioned above) was used for this study. In addition, theory-based

sampling paralleled the major theories previously reviewed—transforming leadership, social learning, and ethical theories. Opportunistic sampling allowed the pursuit of new leads during the fieldwork.

The Council of 100, an organization of the Rockford, Illinois Chamber of Commerce, is comprised of executive officers from the most influential companies in the Rockford area. Rockford, a community of approximately 180,000, is an industrial community consisting primarily of heavy manufacturing industries. The Council reflects a microcosm of the industrial community. Its members are extremely knowledgeable about the community, its industrial organizations, and their leaders and managers. Therefore, this body was chosen as the nominating body for this study. The Council has diverse representation reflecting that of the community. Both women and minority members are on the Council; however, the numbers of both are very low.

Council members were provided the definitions above of transforming leaders and a list of criteria that nominees must fit. See Table 1. Table 2 provides the demographic information of leaders who participated in the study. Two leaders interviewed desired to remain anonymous; one agreed to data reporting, but the other's* data are not presented here. That individual's company* is also not part of the completed study. Also, one leader nominated is not from the immediate Rockford area and was accepted as part of the study. The results of the nomination process were that 81 leaders were nominated as meeting the criteria. Eighteen were nominated multiple times; therefore, these were considered the prime candidates for the study. The top 12 candidates were contacted and asked to participate; due to company transitions, 5 were not able to complete participation. Therefore, 7 Rockford leaders participated; however, as mentioned above, one chose not to be included.

Due to the researcher's activities in other companies outside of Rockford, individuals from another company learned about the study and asked if they could nominate a leader. Since the integrity of these individuals was beyond question, they were permitted to use the criteria and determine if their proposed candidate fit the criteria. They deemed that she did and nominated her. Therefore, the full study engaged seven manufacturing leaders. In addition, the research methods involved interviewing at least two other individuals who worked with each leader nominated in the same organization for the purpose of triangulating data and validating the leader responses. "Most qualitative research studies comment on the importance of trustworthiness in the investigation" (Lucas, 1997, p. 103). Therefore, as with the Lucas study, this researcher followed the procedures of Lincoln and Guba (1985) to build trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

As mentioned, several methods to validate and triangulate data were used: secondary interviews (at least two per leader) and a study of other materials. These individuals were identified by the leaders themselves. They were all comfortable, however, offering the researcher her choice of whom to interview. Several of those interviewed during the secondary interview process were on the Council's nomination list with at least one nomination. Peer debriefing was used as well. A third party analyzed the data and organized it, in addition to that done by the researcher. Participant checks also took place. Each leader and colleague interviewed read over his/her comments to confirm accuracy. To address transferability, interview information was transcribed verbatim and categorized according to relevant and irrelevant data. Because the researcher adhered to a rigid rule of little interaction, almost all of the interview data were relevant. There was very little superfluous information. The response patterns and themes were charted and transferability accuracy was also checked by all interviewees.

Confirmability of all data can be easily accomplished through the audiotapes, researcher notes, transcriptions, confirmations, and analyses. Dependability is usually addressed by employing an inquiry auditor. Because this study was self-funded, there was no inquiry auditor; however, the rigorous process of transcribing and checks and approvals serve to address dependability. An auditor was simply too expensive. The process whereby each leader and colleague were provided a copy of their transcripts and this publication to check and approve served as an audit. And, finally, confidentiality was promised and strictly adhered to. There was composite reporting only.

See Table 2 for leader demographics—seven white males and one white female. Interviews with each leader and each one of their colleagues were each approximately 2.5 to 3 hours in length. The interviews were very similar in nature. Both sets of interviewees received the list of questions one week before the interview. Interviews were audiotaped for note-taking purposes. Tapes were transcribed and used in the data organization and analysis stage of the project. See Table 3 for the list of questions asked of leaders and their colleagues.

All data, interview transcripts, vitae, company information, and leadership training program and materials were studied and analyzed to answer the following questions:

1. Is the leader a moral and ethical transforming leader? What traits, characteristics, behaviors, and actions were identified to provide evidence that they are transforming leaders?
2. What factors influence the decision-making processes and actions of these [transforming] leaders?
3. Is the leader a superleader who

Table 1: Leader Nomination Criteria

1.	must hold (or have held recently) a leadership position in an industrial setting, such as a president, CEO, plant manager, vice president or other high level industrial position in the Rockford area
2.	must practice transforming leadership as defined by Burns (1978)
3.	must be a leader who adheres to their commitments to bring about promised change resulting in an improved social or human condition (Burns, 1978)
4.	must sustain commitment to definable moral principles (Colby & Damon, 1992)
5.	must exhibit consistency between one's espoused values and actions (Colby & Damon, 1992)
6.	must exhibit willingness to risk one's self-interest for the sake of one's moral values (Colby & Damon, 1992)
7.	must exemplify a sense of realistic humility about one's own importance relative to the world at large, implying a relative lack of concern for one's own ego (Colby & Damon, 1992)
8.	must exhibit a dedicated responsiveness to the lives of others (Colby & Damon, 1992)
9.	must have at least 10 years of professional experience

Table 3

	Questions of Leaders	Questions of Colleagues
1.	How would you describe yourself as a leader? What characteristics have you brought to your work which enable you or others to view you as a leader?	How would you describe _____ as a leader? What characteristics does he/she bring to work which enables you or others to view him/her as a leader?
2.	From your perspective, what are the essential ingredients of leadership?	From your perspective, what are the essential ingredients of leadership?
3.	What purpose does your leadership serve? Why do you lead?	What purpose does leadership serve? Why should people lead?
4.	Are there values you can identify which are essential to your leadership? What are the core values you operate from in your leadership?	Are there values you can identify which are essential to leadership? What are the core values for leadership?
5.	How do you feel about being identified as a moral leader?	How does he/she exhibit moral leadership?
6.	At what point in time did you realize you were a leader?	How does he/she exhibit ethical leadership?
7.	Who and/or what were your teachers?	Who are your mentors, coaches or teachers in the company?
8.	What are the relationships like between you and others in the organization? Do you socialize primarily with those who also work in the company or outside the company?	What are the relationships like between him/her and others in the organization? Do you socialize primarily with those who also work in the company or outside the organization?
9.	What do you intentionally do in your leadership that inspires others to act ethically and morally?	What do you think he/she does in leading that inspires others to act ethically or morally?
10.	What do you find that inhibits followers= ability to act ethically or morally?	What do you find that inhibits followers= ability to act ethically and morally in this company?
11.	In bringing about change, what leadership style or strategies have you relied upon?	In bringing about change, what leadership style or strategies have you seen used in this organization?
12.	Do you think of yourself as someone who has or has had power/ How have you used that power in leadership?	Do you think of him/her as someone who has or has had power? How has he/she used that power in their leadership of this organization?
13.	What is the most serious ethical issue or dilemma you have faced in your career? What did you do about it?	What is the most serious ethical issue or dilemma you have experienced in this organization? What was done about it?
14.	Did you ever face a conflict where the moral principle was not clear? How did you handle the situation?	Have you been involved in or observed a conflict where the moral principle was not clear? How was the situation handled?
15.	What, if any, barriers, or obstacles have you faced in your leadership? (Values in conflict, negative influence of superiors, etc.) How did you overcome these obstacles?	What, if any, barriers or obstacles have you faced in your leadership here? Or, have you observed for others here? (Values in conflict, negative influences of superiors, etc.) How were these barriers or obstacles overcome?
16.	In your life, what do you do to seek renewal as it relates to your leadership?	In your life, what do you do to seek renewal as it relates to leadership?
17.	How do you provide opportunities for leadership growth and development for followers in your organization (ll levels)?	How does he/she provide opportunities for leadership growth and development for followers in your organization (all levels)?
18.	What are your strengths and weaknesses as a leader?	What are his/her strengths and weaknesses as a leader?
19.	Was there any particular experience or event in your life that strongly influenced your leadership and/or management style? What was it and how did it influence you?	Has the company faced any particular events, situations, dilemmas that strongly influenced the leadership style or management style used by leaders or managers? What was it and how did it change things?
20.	How do you view your role as a leader outside the company? (Community leadership)	How do you view the role of a company leader outside the company? (Community leadership)
21.	What is the difference between a leader and a manager?	What is the difference between a leader and a manager?
22.	Do you think leading in manufacturing organizations is different than leading in any other type of organization?	Do you think leading in manufacturing organizations is different than leading in any other type of organization?

develops others to be leaders?

4. Does the leader use modeling, both behavioral and dialogic, as a way to influence the behavior of followers?
5. What similar themes or patterns emerged across leader responses?
6. Was it possible to validate the themes or patterns through the secondary interviews?

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by first categorizing responses by questions. Qualitative research involves an inductive analysis process whereby the researcher searches for themes and patterns which emerge from the data. One has to carefully judge what is meaningful, relevant, and not relevant with the desire to understand the meanings and actions (Patton, 1990). Therefore, categories were identified through the data convergence and reduction process (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Patton, 1990). Small units of information having heuristic value form the categories "The smallest piece that can stand by itself" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 345). One is clearly able to identify the categories because they emerge from "recurring regularities" (Patton, 1990, p. 403). The differences between categories were determined by testing for internal homogeneity (how well the data in a category congealed) and external heterogeneity (how clear the differences were between categories) identified as teasing data into categories (Patton, 1990). Because so many of the responses were similar on the part of the leaders and their colleagues, the categories of information where there was agreement were easily determined. Categories of responses indicating themes or patterns are identified below by question and across some questions where there was the possibility of inherent duplication of responses. Table 4 shows the themes and patterns for each question. Several other data sets were analyzed as well. The secondary interviews of colleagues were also compiled and analyzed (not presented here). Their responses were

studied, and the themes and patterns were documented. It is interesting to note that the themes and patterns were exactly or extremely similar to those of the leaders themselves. The values, attitudes, actions, feelings, and opinions were significant in that their responses not only confirmed and validated those of the leaders but had further implications for this study (to be discussed in the Results section). Also, company literature, employee handbooks, company policies and procedures, mission/vision statements, reports, and leadership training materials were all reviewed to validate the responses from both sets of interviews to determine consistency between what was stated and what is in practice.

Results

Themes and Patterns Revealed for Each Question

Questions 1 and 2 had inherent duplication, both as questions and in the responses, so the responses are combined. The responses of all leaders were consistent and the themes/patterns matched across respondents well. The responses to these questions were directly answered as a result of asking the question, but there were continuing threads of responses throughout other questions as well reinforcing the direct responses. Examples of actions in other responses also reinforced the responses and their consistency [click here to view Table 4).

The respondents were also consistent about questions 3, 4, and 5. Either the word, meanings, or both were duplicated across respondents. Question 6 revealed at least three different and distinct patterns of responses. The respondents realized they were (potential) leaders at various ages ranging from elementary (2) to teenage or high school years (1) to college (3) and as an adult (1). Questions 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, and 19 also received consistent responses by the leaders interviewed. The themes/patterns of these responses in wording, meanings, and examples threaded throughout other responses showed no discernible differences. See Table 4.

Questions 13 and 14 related to examples of unethical or immoral dilemmas. These were confidential responses, but for the purposes of the study, it is important to note that the leaders had extremely strong positions about personal and company morals and ethics, that immoral or unethical behavior was not to be tolerated. Employees exhibiting unethical or immoral behavior were usually terminated quickly if a fair investigation for facts confirmed the behavior regardless of the level of that person in the company.

Question 18 asked leaders to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. They were open and true to the task. Each one identified his/her own and the secondary/colleague interviews confirmed them as well. However, most discussed or mentioned how all strengths are at times weaknesses and how all weaknesses can sometimes be strengths, depending on the situation. For example, if someone is too aggressive, this might be a weakness in working with people of a foreign culture, but good for the company overall in seeking out business or new partnerships, etc. If one is slow to make difficult decisions about terminating an employee who is not performing, then that individual has probably had many chances to improve. These leaders seem to know themselves fairly well; some are working formally on improving behavior or strengthening their interpersonal skills in very specific areas so that they can be more effective leaders and relate better to their employees. They all recognized the need to control some behaviors and to seek feedback. All were acknowledged as open to receiving feedback and perceived as individuals who used feedback to improve themselves or change. However, several openly seek feedback from employees or colleagues, while others are very open to receiving it but do not seek it out. For example, several respondents mentioned the differences between themselves and the younger generations. Different approaches were mentioned for trying to bridge the gaps. Several others try

to control their "excitement," "aggressiveness," and "emotions" when working with employees who might feel intimidated by such behavior. All of these leaders are personally and highly invested in their companies. This level of investment leads to high emotions at times.

Question 19 had both consistent and similar responses as well as several different themes/patterns. One of the most frequent responses was that observing both effective and ineffective leaders served to teach these leaders how to be a good leader. Another consistent response was that these leaders felt they could learn from everyone around them or that they encountered at all levels in the organization and outside the organization; also, what they learned from people in their past helped them to set personal goals. In addition, there were several different themes or patterns. One respondent mentioned that the early values instilled when growing up strongly influenced his style; another mentioned that going to college and learning how to be a good leader and manager in classes changed his behavior and style completely. One responded that learning to self-analyze and recognize when he was backing down from a tough decision was a critical period in his life as a leader. Finally, another mentioned that working in a company where there was a very positive management philosophy and style helped him to realize what worked with employees. Several mentioned that the military helped them to understand more about leadership and somewhat developed aspects of their style.

There was one primary theme/ pattern in the responses to question 20. All of the leaders, except one, agreed that it is important to be a leader outside the company. There were a variety of reasons, but they agreed that it is an obligation of the company to provide community leaders and that if one has the talent to lead, it is critical to use those skills for building the community as well as the company. However, one leader believed in the responsibility of leadership outside the company, but he personally thought of it as a chore, something he does not enjoy. It seemed that he did

not feel that it was possible to make a difference with some of the major social issues in the community. Because of such limited time, he would prefer to spend what little free time he had doing something else. He believed that working to create a good place to work and to develop people was in some way accomplishing something just as important to the company and community.

Question 21 revealed that these leaders have a good grasp on what the difference is between a leader and a manager. Several have the tendency to micro-manage, seemingly because of their personal investment in the building and development of their companies, and/or the fact that they had been in a variety of management positions during their time in the company, but this researcher would define these leaders as real leaders who understand the leadership process and acknowledge that they operate as leaders primarily. This was confirmed during all the secondary interviews.

Question 22 revealed only one pattern. These leaders feel that leading is the same in any type of organization because leading involves the leadership of people. They did discuss some of the business differences (such as technology, great difficulties in levels of education across employees, unions, producing a "hard" product at high-quality levels, etc.) that might make leading in manufacturing more complex than in other types of businesses, but agreed that the "people issues" were the same regardless of where one is leading.

Discussion and Conclusions

Strengths

Transforming Leadership: All data reviewed provided strong and consistent evidence that these leaders are, in practice, transforming leaders in very significant ways.

1. These leaders, their feelings, attitudes, actions, and the feelings of others about them, present evidence to support that they are engaged in transforming leadership as defined by Burns (1978). Each of them has played a major role in leading compa-

nies through dramatic and similar cultural transitions successfully. The old cultures in each company were similar: power/dictatorial cultures where there seemed to be isolated transactional leadership at best occurring, where the people were not as well respected nor their interests protected in a genuine sense, and where profit was the bottom line. In several of the companies, there had been several different company leaders in short spans of time, and all but two of the companies had experienced being purchased one or more times before the current leadership. The employee attitudes ranged from a feeling of "entitlement—whatever I can get out of the company, it owes me" to "resting on past successes and not exhibiting a good work ethic and commitment toward the company." Even in the two more stable companies, there were serious issues that had to be addressed if they were going to remain competitive. In those companies, the employees had to go through a realization process and better understand the current business environment within which they have to compete. In all of these companies, these leaders have managed to either (a) take a company going under and turn it into a successful business venture; or (b) change the culture from a dictatorship to one of participative management, teaming, collaborative leadership, etc. In other words, the evidence about these leaders speaks well to their ability "to role up their sleeves" and work with people to raise everyone to higher standards, morally, ethically, and financially. All admit that there is still a lot of work to be done. All but two of the leaders have been engaged in these culture changes for only 3-4 years, one for just 1 year. The other two have been leading their companies for 12 years, but the complexities and difficulties of the changes they led their companies through were phenomenal. Both companies were in serious trouble and extremely vulnerable to going under.

In addition, these leaders believe that high morals and ethical behavior are critical to good leadership and would probably not agree with Rost

(1991) that the moral aspect does not have to be a requirement for leadership. They all believe in moral empowerment and would agree probably with Ciulla (1995) that the real question is, "What is good leadership?" They believe that good leadership involves high morals and ethical and unquestionable behavior at all times, both inside the company and outside in the community.

Decision-making Processes:
2. The factors that seem to play evident roles in the leaders' decision-making processes and actions are clearly morals; ethics; a serious concern for their employees, customers, suppliers, and the community; a conscious effort to do the right thing; and the sincere desire to treat people right, respectfully; to develop them, challenge them, expand their potential; and provide a good, healthy, and stimulating working environment and climate. In addition, they seem to be extremely concerned about building a company that is a good corporate citizen in the community. These individuals have high morals and a very definite sense of right and wrong as defined by Toffler (1986) and Shea (1988). In consideration of the ethical aspect of this study, these individuals seem to exemplify all 10 of the patterns of moral leadership identified by Colby and Damon (1992) listed in the section above, Social Learning Theory and Modeling.

These leaders understand and clearly indicated in their own way that they are not morally perfect, but the depth of their convictions was obvious and also confirmed by their colleagues. They have what seems to be a deep and genuine appreciation and respect for the people they work with, and seem to be able to balance the demands of a complex and turbulent business environment with their responsibility for their employees' health and well-being and believe that it is their moral duty to do the right thing for all involved, including the community.

SuperLeadership:
3. The evidence also clearly supports that these leaders are engaged in SuperLeadership in that they are all striving to identify and develop other leaders, to teach employees to be self-leaders as defined by Sims and Lorenz (1992). They are clearly teaching and influencing others to be responsible, competent, capable, and self-disciplined. The leaders are accomplishing this by providing opportunities, training and development, building confidence, and holding people accountable in the right way. They are trying to instill a culture where risk-taking and failure are not penalized nor punished—a culture where one carefully takes risks and if failure occurs, one must learn from it and keep on going. They model or "walk-the-talk" of their philosophies and seem to truly empower their employees at levels appropriate for ability and skills with the attitude that one can grow and develop into greater responsibilities. These leaders seem to actually give up power, the only way to really empower others.

Influencing Through Modeling and Moral Talk:
4. Modeling is very important to each of these leaders. They unconsciously seem to model their moral and ethical attitudes in decision making, actions, and how they treat employees, customers, and suppliers, but they are also conscious of their behavior and strive to be exemplary role models when it comes to these types of behaviors. It is important to them that their employees and others in the community understand their values, and they feel that the best way for that to occur is for them never to be observed in breach of those values. Their philosophies towards modeling or "walking-the-talk" and its purpose seem to fit well into Bandura's (1977) concept. These leaders understand fully and believe that people learn from what they see others do and what they see rewarded or punished. They also believe that modeling through "moral talk" is important. All were reported to be individuals who openly talk at every opportunity about

their beliefs, what is right, wrong, and ethical in both company contexts and outside the company contexts whenever possible (Bird & Waters, 1989).

Weaknesses
There seem to be several areas of leadership about which all the leaders openly discussed their concerns. Although they are working very hard to teach and provide development in leadership, most of the companies have just begun to work seriously in that area. They have made significant progress with the upper-level managers, and in particular companies, those managers have made some difference in their groups. In general, however, leadership development is still a weak area of activity although rather highly prioritized. To date, all companies have begun some sort of training program. Several have been engaged in training upper-level managers for several years (that seems to be where SuperLeadership is in practice), but beyond that very little seems to have trickled down. They value it, realize its importance, and are working on the development of formal programs that will reach all levels, but there is still much work to be done and a long way to go. However, considering the major culture changes taking place, even those who have been at it for 12 years, and the major business tribulations, they have done well so far.

By their own admission and concern, another area of weakness in all companies is that of equity. Women and minorities are not well represented in leadership or management roles. Rockford and its companies are very traditional in attitudes towards nontraditional roles. This attitude seems to still pervade even in these companies where relatively good leadership is practiced. However, this is one area where strong values, modeling, and moral talk can easily make a difference.

An area of interest to consider is the gap between what leaders say and then do, the "walk the talk" aspect of industrial leadership. Obviously there is a gap between what the leaders have prioritized and what is happening in the

companies, e.g., leadership development, equity, etc. One of the colleagues interviewed mentioned that he had spent 40 years observing various cultures, leadership styles, and levels of effectiveness, and has noticed the difference between what leaders say and what they do. He was especially interested in the moral and ethical aspects of leadership, and noted that as leaders move up the hierarchy, they seem to drift farther away from their core values and develop "blind spots." He questioned whether leaders are in fact as moral and ethical as they believe themselves to be. He feels that there is a direct correlation between a leader's level in the organization and this phenomenon.

It seems clear from the data available from this study that there is a gap between what is happening in the leaders' direct realm of management and their management teams and beyond those teams to other levels in the organization. Positive cultural changes and transforming leadership seem to be taking place at the upper levels of the organizations. There is also some evidence that others within these realms are exhibiting signs of practicing transforming leadership and also implementing positive cultural changes at the executive level. However, most of the leaders mentioned that they still have a long way to go in implementing cultural change throughout their companies and, as mentioned above, in creating development opportunities for emerging or potential leaders. The gaps are clearly there, but each of the leaders was fully cognizant of these gaps and the unrealized potential not being tapped if the gaps continue to exist and the positive results which could be reaped if they are gradually reduced or eliminated. The leaders fully acknowledged the issues, strengths, and weaknesses of their leadership practices and their companies' cultures, and discussed how they are going about making the changes necessary to further develop a positive and competitive organizational culture where people are considered the greatest asset. They also acknowl-

edged some of the barriers and that the changes will take time.

The results of this study are reflective of those of the 1999 Andersen Consulting Institute for Strategic Change study. The report, <u>The Evolving Role of Executive Leadership</u>, indicates that there "is little question that the quality and quantity of business leadership is a cause for serious concern" (p. 4). The Andersen Consulting report also cited a study by the Centre for Research in Employment and Technology in Europe which found that over half the organizations participating admitted that there was inadequate preparation for leadership at the top management levels. Because there is still confusion about the nature of "leadership", . . . it can be constructive or destructive, if perceived as an exercise of power rather than something to grow. In teams, good leadership results in "25% more revenue, goods, or programs; 55% more tasks accomplished; 63% fewer people stressed or burned; and [employees] will take up innovative ideas 61% of the time instead of 23% and resolve conflicts 87% of the time instead of 22%." (p. 5)

Peer assessment and the 360-degree feedback techniques are being used. It is clear from Andersen's research that well-led teams produce significantly more and have less stress and fewer conflicts. Leadership cannot always be taught in a class, so assignments are serving as the most effective way to learn about effective leadership. There is clearly a difference between leadership and management. Followers want "direction, trust and hope" (Andersen Consulting Institute for Strategic Change, 1999, p. 5). Leaders must provide these three things. Bennis (1994) concluded that "the key to competitive advantage in the '90s <u>and beyond</u> will be the capacity of leadership to create the social architecture capable of generating intellectual capital" (p. 10). This means solving customers' problems rather than selling them more and more hardware. The old construct of leadership was based upon dominance and the assumption

that the leader had all the information to make the right decisions. The "concept of intellectual capital—ranging from patents and technical know-how through corporate systems and databases to customer goodwill and individual skills and experience—implies that the assumption is no longer valid (if it ever was)" (p. 6). The quality and complexity of information means that leaders can no longer have it all at their fingertips—people on the front line must be empowered to make decisions based upon their own knowledge and experience. Effective leadership understands that and empowers employees to do exactly that. To better define leadership, the Anderson Consulting Institute for Strategic Change has identified certain leadership competencies that can make the difference between success and failure. The leadership profile includes 14 dimensions or characteristics:

1. Create a Shared Vision
2. Ensure Customer Satisfaction
3. Live the Values
4. Build Teamwork and Partnerships
5. Think Globally
6. Appreciate Cultural Diversity
7. Develop and Empower People
8. Anticipate Opportunity
9. Achieve Competitive Advantage
10. Embrace Change
11. Share Leadership
12. Demonstrate Personal Mastery
13. Show Technological Savvy
14. Encourage Constructive Challenge

In concluding, it is obvious from Table 4 that very similar patterns and themes emerged across leader responses in this study, and the secondary interviews of their colleagues validated their responses unequivocally. It is evident from the data and rigorous methods used that the leaders participating in the study are transforming leaders, and although not perfect, they are focused on a moral and ethical leadership process in all decision making, actions, and strategies. In today's turbulent global context, there are direct challenges daily to that

process. However, as they evolve their leadership development programs to reach beyond the executive and upper-management levels, the challenges should become easier to address.

Recommendations for Industrial Technology Programs

It is clear from the most recent studies and other earlier studies that effective leadership cannot always be taught in a class. Nanus (1989) indicated that classes were the third or fourth most effective way to learn how to lead effectively. The most effective methods were to work with and observe a leader in action, to be assigned a challenge where one had to learn while performing (to stretch into new abilities), and to fail and learn. Newer methods for courses involve students in an action research method where they are assigned authentic learning activities involving leadership. These methods can be used in formal university classes; they can be infused into existing classes where students are required to lead learning activities or projects, do action research in a local industry individually or in teams, or they can be the operational framework for courses on leadership where students learn about and operate within an industrial context, leading industrially related projects, but learn about effective leadership in tandem or through industrial learning experiences. Whatever the case, it is imperative that we give more attention to leadership in the curriculum across courses and contexts, both with individual and team projects involving students in simulated learning experiences and more authentic ones with local industry. This will greatly impact the success potential of our students once they enter industry. They will carry with them an understanding of the difference leaders can make and mental models of leadership strategies.

Acknowledgments

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