



# LEADER THOUGHT

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Volume 1

*Thoughtful Approaches to Powerful Leadership*

## *The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Organization*

***T***his isn't your father's organization. Jack Welch Jr., past CEO of General Electric said that, "The pace of change in the '90's will make the 80's look like a walk in the park. Competition will be relentless. The bar of excellence will be raised everyday..." Well, the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century is telling you to forget walking or running, we're not even in the park. As Dorothy said to Toto in *The Wizard of Oz*, "Toto, we're not in Kansas anymore!"

We have been and continue to ratchet-up the chaos of organization life. We operate in a world of uncertainty and accelerating change. Just look around you; read the newspapers; turn on the television. Competition will be fierce; markets will be merciless. Economics will be based on intellectual capital. Small companies will outsmart large corporations on a global scale. Customers have infinite access to products, services and information. Therefore, they are demanding faster,

cheaper and better products and services. You need to do business in real time or you will die.

So, what's a leader to do? In *Rethinking the Future*, Rowen Gibson describes a very different successful organization of the future. It will be smaller and networked with decentralized profit centers. The culture will be one of high trust and will have a learning infrastructure. People will be utilized wherever they're needed, and will be treated like "owners". The challenge is to combine the discipline necessary to run the organization, with the freedom that allows the individual to excel. The answer lies in the need to create an organization landscape that is uniquely your own. "Me-toos" will no longer be winners. To paraphrase Charles Handy, the winners will be those who 'invent the world', not respond to it.

Leaders need to have passion and a vision. They should be

looking forward, scanning the landscape, watching the competition and quickly, but thoughtfully, taking advantage of new opportunities while setting trends – Acting nothing like a 'me too' organization. Leaders need to be leveraging technology for interaction and real-time connection with the marketplace, getting and using feedback; using intuition to react to information as much as analysis. Most of all, leaders need to love and embrace change and create a proactive continuous change, collaborative culture; being comfortable with discontinuity and using it to create those trend-setting opportunities.

Again, so what's a leader to do in face of the breakneck speed, nothing like your father's organizational scenario? Get ready to create a unique roadmap for moving your organization toward excellence and success with very little paved pathways and a great deal of off-roading.

*Next month: The Beginning of the Journey – Redefining Powerful Leadership*