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The Journal of Innovative Management

is a peer-reviewed quarterly journal for people who are improving the way their organization runs. The purpose is to facilitate increased learning and innovation by providing people with cross-discipline stories of transformation through participative planning, problem solving, and innovation. It is written to help leaders, managers, and workers to:

- Cope with the growing need to integrate quality management, systems applications, and creativity and innovation into their organization dynamics
- Integrate academic thought with real-world applications
- Cope with learning time pressures by using an article format that enables faster reading and improved initial learning
- Facilitate a sense of community as readers see how people from various organizational settings and sectors face and solve what are essentially common leadership and managerial problems
- Achieve performance excellence throughout the organization.

The Journal of Innovative Management publishes articles that fall into the following matrix of categories:

- Case studies, applied research, tools, leadership perspective, and news & views
- Organizational transformation; participative planning; problem solving, and innovation; process design, management, and improvement
- Private sector; public sector; and non-profit organization settings
- Leading-edge and experience-based information, generally 1–3 years old.

Reader Services

The Journal of Innovative Management (ISSN: 1081-0714) is published quarterly by GOAL/QPC

Bob King, Publisher
Laurence R. Smith, Editor
Jenny Donelan, Editor/Writer
Janet Ireland, Graphic Designer

Name or address corrections: Send address or other changes to:
Journal Subscriptions
GOAL/QPC
12-B Manor Parkway
Salem, NH 03079-2862.

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$10.00 (minimum order) for 1 or 2 copies.
$ 3.50 each for 3–49 copies.
$ 3.00 each for 50–99 copies.
$ 2.70 each for 100–499 copies.
$ 2.50 each for 500–999 copies.
$ 2.30 each for 1000+ copies.

Reprints are available in hardcopy, Adobe Acrobat™ PDF format, or as a next-day fax.

Single copies of the Journal are $25.00. Back issues of the Journal are $15.00. Please call for quantity pricing.

Members of GOAL/QPC receive a subscription to the Journal of Innovative Management as a membership benefit.

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Wisdom Supporting Freedom

Freedom is a popular topic: free will, free enterprise, free trade, freedom of speech, free choice, and even the free world. We talk about preserving freedom and fighting for freedom. So freedom is obviously important to people.

Wisdom is talked about a lot, too: respecting wisdom, seeking wisdom, being wise. Is there a correlation between freedom and wisdom? Are wisdom and freedom related and, if so, how? What might that mean for those who are involved in leading and managing?

The French artist, Jules Dalou (1838-1902), viewed wisdom and freedom as a human struggle. As an artist, Dalou was able to communicate this idea with a statue that powerfully portrays the idea that freedom is not as strong as and is more vulnerable than wisdom. And when the inevitable battles to maintain freedom in life arrive, freedom will fall unless supported by wisdom, which has the strength and armor of a warrior. Dalou’s statue of Wisdom Supporting Freedom is shown here, courtesy of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. It is currently on display in this Smithsonian museum, in Washington, D.C.

The notion of wisdom doesn’t appear to be raised very often in management or leadership gatherings, however, and when it does it tends to get pushed aside as philosophical rather than a practical topic. But can wisdom be practical as well as philosophical?

Practical business leaders will often turn to psychologists for help in organizational dynamics. Martin Seligman, Fox Leadership Professor at the University of Pennsylvania and past president of the American Psychological Association, writes:

For the last half century psychology has been consumed with a single topic only—mental illness—and has done fairly well with it. But this progress has come at a high cost. Relieving the states that make life miserable, it seems, has made building the states that make life worth living less of a priority. But people want more than to just correct their weakness. They want lives imbued with meaning, and not just to fidget until they die. The time has finally arrived for a science that seeks to understand positive emotion, build strength and virtue, and provide guideposts for finding what Aristotle called the “good life.”

When Dr. Seligman mentions Aristotle he is, of course, referring to a philosopher. But then William James, generally considered to be the founder of American psychology, was a philosopher. Obviously the two fields go hand-in-hand.

Wisdom, however, appears to be a multifaceted phenomenon, not a simple one. In his book, Authentic Happiness, Dr. Seligman cites work that he and Christopher Peterson did. They find that wisdom is a virtue and there are six routes to displaying wisdom: (1) Curiosity/Interest in the World. (2) Love of Learning. (3) Judgement/Critical Thinking/Open-Mindedness. (4) Ingenuity/Originality/Practical Intelligence/Street Smarts. (5) Social Intelligence/Personal Intelligence/Emotional Intelligence. (6) Perspective.

One can clearly see from this list that wisdom has great strength. Can we see the possible vulnerability of freedom and how wisdom is needed to support it? Perhaps Somerset Maugham can help: If a nation values anything more than freedom, it will lose its freedom, and the irony of it is that if it is comfort or money that it values more, it will lose that too.
About the articles in this issue...
Laurence R. Smith, Editor ~ email: lsmith@goalqpc.com

Freedom For All to Succeed

EDRAD’s John Friel is a CEO who believes that the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence help him and his people to become more motivated, loyal, competitive, innovative, customer focused, and better able to create the right processes for delivering more value to customers. Friel tells a story of speaking to a group of 7th- and 8th-children. He asks them what they think it means to be the CEO of a company.

It doesn’t take too long before one of them says something to the effect of, you’re the big boss. You get to tell everybody what to do, and isn’t that great? This is exactly the answer I’m looking for, of course. So then I tell them that’s not what being a CEO is about.

The big boss is actually the customer. Customers can fire all 1,500 of our employees in an instant, just by not buying our products or services. The whole lot of us can lose our jobs, on the spot. We have no recourse. It’s the customers who give us their hard-earned money and they’re the ones that are cutting the checks. They’re putting our kids through school, and putting food on the table. So they are actually “the big boss.”

I don’t do anything that provides value for our customers. I don’t design. I don’t service. My sole role is to create the right environment for the people who are doing the real work for the company and providing real value to our customers.

At The Boeing Company’s Integrated Defense Systems, Lean generates operational efficiency, and Baldrige provides a framework for continuous improvement. Debbie Collard, the director of business excellence, has helped lead two divisions of Boeing to win a Baldrige Award: Airlift and Tanker (1998) and Aerospace Support (2003).

Today we use the Baldrige Criteria as our approach for assessment and improvement, as well as to integrate all our improvement activities across the organization.

The success stories from Airlift and Tanker and Aerospace Support have served as benchmarks, provided lessons learned and best practices, and most of all, have proven that this stuff really works, no matter what type of organization you’re in. Our ultimate objective in using Baldrige is to improve all of our processes to achieve flawless execution.

We use Lean at Boeing, which for us is all about being faster, better, cheaper, and having less inventory and less waste. We have been implementing Lean for quite some time, primarily across manufacturing and engineering operations. We’ve achieved some great successes.

Richland College is the first community college to receive a Baldrige Award. The president, Stephen Mittlestet, Ph.D., tells us:

Today’s world of uncertainty and constant pressures requires organizations to do more with less. Therefore, without a supportive values-based culture, our employees would, like many employees in dysfunctional organizations, simply leave their souls at home. They would play it safe at work, put in their time, go through the motions, and re-engage their whole selves only when they return to the safety of their homes. At Richland, we’ve created systems and a data-informed environment that make it safe to bring the whole self to work and to learn every day. We promote responsible risk-taking and joy in an environment where creativity, innovation, and student learning are valued—in short, a climate that promotes performance excellence.

Twenty-five years ago GOAL/QPC began teaching management with Dr. W. Edwards Deming in an effort to grow jobs, and improve communities. Journal editor Laurence Smith was there at the beginning. Then, and now, a vital issue is about how leaders and managers think. In “Leadership and Managing Thought,” Smith points out that:

The notion of improving quality is frequently encouraged in business and industry, and this generally involves a focus on production and service processes. It is, however, just as important to pay attention to internal quality. The quality of leadership and management begins with the quality of thought. It ends with the quality of words said and deeds done. In other words, the way we can distinguish high-quality leadership and management from low-quality leadership and management is by looking at the results. If the results of one’s leadership and management are not of the desired quality, one must look to see what thoughts and words are being put into the thought-stream to begin with.
How the Baldrige Framework Helped MEDRAD Become More Competitive

John P. Friel, President and Chief Executive Officer, MEDRAD, Inc., Indianola, Pennsylvania

At MEDRAD, we design, manufacture, sell, and support medical imaging and therapeutic products that are used in imaging labs in hospitals and clinics around the world. We’re a global company with a presence in more than seventeen countries. We have over 1,500 employees. Last year our revenues exceeded $400 million, so to some people we’re a large company; to others, we’re small.

MEDRAD was honored to be the recipient of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in 2003. We’ve been on our quality journey for more than fifteen years, and we use the Baldrige Criteria to help us be more competitive every day.

The MEDRAD Philosophy is an actual document that we have on display in the main hallway of our headquarters in Indianola, Pennsylvania (just outside Pittsburgh). Our employees’ signatures are all around its border. Every five years, we bring the document to our annual meetings around the world and give employees a chance to show their commitment by signing it.

The MEDRAD Philosophy was drafted back in 1983, and we’re still using it today. It has been an evergreen document for us. One part of the philosophy states that we exist for our three main stakeholder groups: end user customers, shareowner customers, and employee customers.

We also have three evergreen goals that pertain to why we exist:

- To improve the quality of healthcare
- To ensure continued growth and profit
- To provide an enjoyable and rewarding place to work

MEDRAD technology enables imagery such as CT scans that save lives every day. A cross-sectional view of a patient’s body, for example, makes it possible to locate conditions such as aneurysms so they can be addressed before they become lethal. These kinds of images would not be possible without the use of MEDRAD technology, and of course the imaging scanners — we’re just a piece of the operation. This is the kind of value we bring to our customers.

We also exist to ensure continued growth and profit. I’m an unabashed, for-profit, capitalist. What we do is not a hobby. In 1997, as CEO of the organization, I set a
goal to double our revenue every five years, and achieve a 15% growth rate. A lot of our employees thought I was crazy at the time. But Baldrige helped us do it. We initially set the goal to double to $250 million by 2002, which we accomplished, and now our goal is to hit $500 million by 2007. We are ahead of that target right now.

One thing that Baldrige certainly encourages you to do is to be a thief, to steal shamelessly, and there are a lot of ideas we’ve stolen from others. One of these is the phrase, or rather a paraphrase, from General Patton: We compete with our products and services, but we win with our people. Our employees are our greatest resource, and we rely on them for our continued success. We also employ many programs and processes to promote employee growth and satisfaction. And we reinforce all of this with recognition programs.

We are a scorecard company. Our five scorecard goals are:

- Exceed the financials
- Grow the company
- Improve quality and productivity
- Improve customer satisfaction
- Improve employee productivity and satisfaction

These five corporate goals link to our three evergreen goals, to our Philosophy, and to our three main customer groups.

Figure 1 shows our performance over the past six years. An “x” means we achieved over 100% of our goal. There are thirty possible scores here. Out of those, twenty-five were above 100%. Three were between 99% and 100%. The other two were 98% and 97%. I make the analogy that this is our report card, and I submit that if your kid came home from school with a report card like this, you’d be pretty pleased with his or her performance. What this shows is a consistency to our execution.
Case Study • MEDRAD, Inc.

Medrad faces challenges

The medical device manufacturing industry is definitely facing numerous challenges. Among them are increased foreign competition due to lower labor costs in developing countries such as China, a fast-changing regulatory environment, and rapid technological change, including the need to protect intellectual property in a global environment.

How to be more competitive with Baldrige

So how do we become more competitive in an industry facing these global challenges? The short answer is to deliver more value to customers. He or she with the greatest value equation is the one who’s going to win the business.

The Baldrige framework helps us deliver more value in various ways, including these four key areas:

- Innovation
- Customer focus
- Process improvement
- Employee motivation and loyalty

Innovation and the voice of the customer

For us, innovation means advancing the ability for our customers to do their jobs and conduct their business. We do this by deploying numerous voice-of-the-customer techniques and tools to help us to find current and potential customer needs. The idea is for us to come up with a product that is just so good, which meets the needs of our customers so well, they say, “I have to have it.”

We use multiple opportunities and techniques to capture the voice of the customer. These include surveys, visits to customers, conventions, trade shows, and primary and secondary research with focus groups and thought leaders.

Not too long ago, we used all of these techniques in an organized, process-oriented manner to find out more about our CT product line. We learned that our customers were telling us to reduce the amount of contrast medium and improve image quality. But here we had a bit of divergence between our US and our European customers. European customers were telling us we needed to change the piece of equipment in question to dual-technology—meaning two syringes. But our US customers didn’t see the need; they were used to the single syringe technology.

As the bulk of our sales were coming from the United States, our tendency was to lean toward those US customers, to listen more to them and simply deliver the single-syringe product. But after some additional work with our customers, we came to the conclusion that we should develop two systems: the single for the US and the dual for Europe.

We introduced the dual-technology product in 2003. By 2005, more than 64% of our customers for CT products worldwide—not just Europe—bought the dual product, so it was a good thing we had listened to the Europeans. Not only did the percentage portion of the business that went to the dual product increase, the overall market increased dramatically as well. We now have approximately 70% market share for this particular type of product.

This is an example of using innovation to deliver value. The whole Baldrige frame-
work was key to our success. We studied the business environment, followed good business processes, listened to our customers, and innovated to fill an unmet need. I can only imagine what our situation might be now if we had not listened to our customers, and simply pursued the single-syringe technology instead.

For us, customer focus means delighting our customers and building loyalty with them. We have a global approach to this. We use surveys to monitor our performance in all of the different markets we’re in. We measure and benchmark key success factors, analyze the results of that benchmarking, and then analyze ways to continuously improve what we’re doing. We survey different customer groups in critical areas of performance, such as product reliability, on-time delivery, training application support, service support, sales experience, etc., which enables us to identify the key interest needs of our customers. This Baldrige-type approach helps us sustain and improve our customer focus.

Here’s one way we improved that focus. Initially we were out to satisfy our customers. Satisfaction on a 5-point scale meant a 4 or a 5 from the customer. Back in 2000, we were in the 99% range in terms of customer satisfaction scores, and we felt pretty good about ourselves.

But then we decided to shift from looking at merely satisfied to what we call top box—the highest ratings only; the 5s. We’d discovered research that shows when a customer gives you a 5 on a survey, that customer is probably very loyal. When customers give you a 4, they’re telling you they’re satisfied, but when the next time to buy comes around, they’ll still consider alternatives. In contrast, many of those customers who give you 5s won’t even consider the competition. They become brand loyal. We have questions on our survey about the competition and we often get comments back saying the customer didn’t even consider the competition. “We only looked at MEDRAD.”

That’s what we’re trying to achieve. Focus on that top box-level satisfaction, and you’ll get that kind of loyalty from your customers.

We benchmark ourselves against best-in-class. For example, we benchmarked ourselves against industry leaders in the category “time to arrive” for our service outreach. And we discovered we were below the best-in-class benchmark for our field service. So we used surveys to find we had a weak point in Europe, where we had a lack of satisfaction with time to arrive. We looked further to discover that the lack of satisfaction had to do with parts availability. We were facing challenges in getting our parts from Indianola, Pennsylvania, to our customers in Europe. So we analyzed what the root causes were and came up with programs to deal with those root causes, made improvements in how we handle our replacement parts, inventory replenishment, and so forth.

We then surveyed our customers again and saw that scores on time to arrive were and are improving.
Process improvement means improving your processes in all areas, big and small. We have worked to engage our employees in making improvements, providing them with tools and resources, helping them channel their ideas, and getting them to submit their improvement ideas.

One example of this is a winding operation in which there was opportunity for improvement. The operation took place in a procedure room and involved a long piece of tubing that needed to be coiled up, which wasn’t particularly easy. I’ve done this myself, and it’s tricky. But one of our employees, who is not an engineer—he has a high school education—said we could improve this process if we put a little clip on the tube. We ended up implementing that employee’s suggested improvement. At some point the engineers did take over and actually design the clips that we now use in this process. But the point is that we encouraged him to share his idea for improvement, and it was invaluable.

The last time I did the calculations, I found that this one process change has enabled us to improve this particular operation and drop about $500,000 from our bottom line. So a little idea, a little improvement from an employee, can have a very significant effect on results. And of course, this helps us to deliver a better value equation.

Another example of process improvement occurred at MEDRAD when a cross-functional team took the initiative to implement improvements in our electro-mechanical operations. As is typical for many companies, as we grew we added new manufacturing processes and products, and eventually ended up with an overly full facility and sub-optimal flow.

The electro-mechanical operations team launched a project to improve manufacturing and processes for our Vistron injection system. Team representatives from across the organization implemented Lean manufacturing concepts into the processes. And we ended up with material flow improvements.

Some of the results of the new flow were a reduction in production cycle time by 60%. We also had a 10% decrease in the floor space—the footprint—needed for this product, a 35% reduction in training cycle time, and a significant reduction in inventory investment.

The Baldrige framework encourages MEDRAD to seek continuous process improvements like these. The subsequent productivity and quality gains help us to then begin generating value that can be translated to our customers, which is what enables us to remain more competitive.

We do realize that people are our greatest resource. We rely on their motivation and loyalty for our continued success. The way I put it, leadership is responsible for creating an environment that allows employees and people who do the real work for the company to be successful.
Figure 2 is what I call our philosophical organization chart. In the school district my kids belong to, people in different careers are often asked to speak to middle schoolers about their work. One time I went in to talk to a group of 7th and 8th graders, and saw that the speaker before me was the Pittsburgh Steelers’ Jerome Bettis. I thought I was in real trouble! But I forged ahead.

One of the things I usually ask the kids is what they think it means to be the CEO of a company. It doesn’t take too long before one of them says something to the effect of, you’re the big boss. You get to tell everybody what to do, and isn’t that great? This is exactly the answer I’m looking for, of course. So then I tell them that’s not what being a CEO is about, and I show them this philosophical org chart.

The big boss is actually the customer. Customers can fire all 1,500 of our employees in an instant, just by not buying our products or services. The whole lot of us can lose our jobs, on the spot. We have no recourse. It’s the customers who give us their hard-earned money and they’re the ones that are cutting the checks. They’re putting our kids through school, and putting food on the table. So they are actually “the big boss.”

We work down from there in our organization chart to sales and service. The customers don’t know anything about our facility, or about beautiful downtown Indianola. What they know are our products, our services, and our salespeople.

Then we move down the chart to the manufacturing people who make the products that the service people support and the sales people sell, and also the marketing folks who come up with the ideas and the innovation.

When we move farther down, we get to the mechanics of the operation, because you need people to cut the paychecks and so forth to keep everything going.

Then you get down to department managers, and next, to the Executive Committee.

And then, I tell the kids, at the bottom of the chart, is me. And I don’t do anything that provides value for our customers. I don’t design. I don’t service. My sole role is to create the right environment for the people who are doing the real work for the company and providing real value to our customers.

This philosophy, and our commitment to employee growth and satisfaction, have helped us to establish an environment in which MEDRAD employees can succeed.
You’ve got to create value. If you have a better value equation, you’re going to be competitive. We believe in the Baldrige framework at MEDRAD and we like to say we do Baldrige every day, because it helps us deliver value to our customers.

John P. Friel has been president and CEO of MEDRAD, Inc., since 1998. Under his leadership, the company has achieved a 15% corporate annual revenue growth, created more than 600 jobs worldwide (500 of them in Pittsburgh), and expanded manufacturing capacity three times.
Successful Coexistence
Compatible Ways Baldrige and Lean are Being Deployed at Integrated Defense Systems

Debbie Collard, Director of Business Excellence, The Boeing Company Integrated Defense Systems

The Boeing Company is the world’s leading aerospace company. We have about 154,000 employees in forty-eight states and sixty-seven countries, and are headquartered in Chicago, Illinois. Boeing has four business units:

- **Commercial Airplanes** are what most people associate with Boeing.
- **The Connexion by Boeing** makes systems to keep people connected. This unit provides high-speed two-way interconnectivity in-flight or for other mobile platforms, such as ships.
- **Boeing Capital Corporation** is a global provider of financing solutions.
- **Integrated Defense Systems**, which is the largest business unit at Boeing both in terms of employees and in revenue, is the defense and space side of the company, providing an extraordinary range of products and services. It is also the business unit where I work, and the area of Boeing will focus on.

Integrated Defense Systems (IDS) is further divided into our Advanced Systems Group and three business units:

- **Network & Space Systems**
- **Precision Engagement & Mobility Systems**
- **Support Systems**

IDS also has functions that support these business units, such as engineering, operations, and business excellence, for example. IDS has approximately 77,000 employees. We have facilities in twenty-one states, and we’re headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. Our 2005 revenue was about $30.8 billion—that represents a pretty good year.

In 1998, our Airlift and Tanker Program, which is now part of the business unit Precision Engagement & Mobility Systems, received the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in the manufacturing sector. In 2003, our Aerospace Support business, now known as Support Systems, received the award for the service sector.

Figure 1 on the next page shows many of the ways in which our two Baldrige units differed from each other. When we began, the Airlift and Tanker program was a manufacturing organization. It was in a very troubled situation, recognized that it was in crisis, and also that it needed to use the criteria as a turnaround, a way to get out of the trouble that it was in.

Contrast Airlift and Tanker with Aerospace Support a few years later. It was a service organization within Boeing, which, by the way, made it somewhat unique within the Boeing Company. And it was a new business that had been formed from tak-
ing the service aspects of multiple other business units, so its business model was just emerging. This business didn’t recognize it was in crisis, which doesn’t mean it wasn’t. And unlike Airlift and Tanker, which was located primarily in one place, Aerospace Support was geographically quite spread out, at 130-plus locations all over the world. Its motivation to use Baldrige was as a proven tool for improvement in the organization.

The success of using Baldrige in these two organizations was based on the criteria itself. That was the only common denominator between these two organizations, and it worked very successfully in both.

That success did not go unnoticed by the senior leaders in the company. In early 2004, the CEO of Integrated Defense Systems established the Business Excellence function, with the charter of deploying the Baldrige Criteria and framework throughout IDS, and establishing a culture of continuous improvement and excellence.

Today we use the Baldrige Criteria as our approach for assessment and improvement, as well as to integrate all our improvement activities across the organization.

The success stories from Airlift and Tanker and Aerospace Support have served as benchmarks, provided lessons learned and best practices, and most of all, have proven that this stuff really works, no matter what type of organization you’re in. Our ultimate objective in using Baldrige is to improve all of our processes to achieve flawless execution.

While it’s had many names, the journey to excellence has been around for quite a long time, both at Boeing and at our subsidiaries. Besides the two awards I’ve already mentioned, we’ve had other milestones: In the early 1990s, the McDonnell Douglas corporation, which merged with Boeing in 1997, used the Baldrige Criteria as an internal evaluation tool across the entire organization. Then fast-forward to 2004, when IDS adopted the use of the criteria across its entire organization. In all, we’ve been on the quality journey using Baldrige for over a decade.

When we set about deploying Baldrige across the IDS, we created the IDS Business Excellence Approach, which we refer to as our two-pronged concurrent approach. Given the large size, geographic dispersion, and organizational complexity of Integrated Defense Systems, we decided that a concurrent approach was the best way
to ensure rapid success. The top prong of this approach includes the required steps that our businesses took to deploy the use of the criteria. The bottom prong is what our category executive champions did across IDS concurrent with the business activities in the top prong. Category executive champions, by the way, are members of the IDS leadership team who are responsible for promoting the use of a particular part of the criteria across the organization, in addition to their regular jobs.

The middle section in between the two prongs is where the ongoing integration and alignment occur. These two prongs together ensure that we address the depth and breadth of the entire complex organization.

We use Lean at Boeing, which for us is all about being faster, better, cheaper, and having less inventory and less waste. We have been implementing Lean for quite some time, primarily across manufacturing and engineering operations. We’ve achieved some great successes.

One example is our F/A-18 program. Our actual costs for production labor support are $100 million less than budgeted. Another example is our C-17 engine pylon workflow. We converted to a pulse moving line in 2002, and reduced assembly costs by 10%, assembly cycle time by 20%, and saved $6.7 million through production of the 180th aircraft.

The next step in our Lean journey includes integrating business excellence and Lean across the entire enterprise, and spreading the Lean principles that we’ve been so successful with in manufacturing and engineering into more of the office environments in the organization.

Boeing Vision 2016 (our long-term goals and vision) identifies Lean enterprise as a core competency. We have defined a desired state for a Lean Enterprise as efficient use of assets, high inventory turns, excellent supplier management, short cycle times, high quality, and low transaction costs.

We’ve been on the Lean enterprise journey, as well as the Baldrige journey, for over a decade. Our Lean story began with an inquiry from the US Air Force, one of our main customers, about Lean at Toyota. They had been hearing a lot about it and they wondered whether Lean principles could be applied at Boeing as well. We benchmarked 35 companies and developed our Lean manufacturing assessment tool in 1997 from the lessons we learned through that benchmarking.

Our Lean manufacturing assessment tool measures seven areas: leadership, field organization, empowerment and teams, inventory and supply, manufacturing processes, continuous process improvement, and workplace culture. Each of these is a measure on a scale of 1-5. 1 to 1.9 equals a traditional company by our definition; 2 to 2.9 means partial deployment of Lean and 3 to 3.9 means a significant deployment; 4 to 4.9 represents a recognized Lean location; and 5 is a world-class Lean enterprise.
Best practices are those that are expected to be observed in a well-performing factory. We apply the nine tactics of Lean using the sixteen best practices, as shown in Figure 2.

![Figure 2. IDS Lean Approach.](image-url)

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<td>9. Moving Lines</td>
<td>10. Safety</td>
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<td>11. Foreign Object Debris</td>
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<td>12. Point of Use</td>
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<td>13. Pull Systems</td>
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<td>14. Breakthrough Process Redesign</td>
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<td>15. Manufacturing Self/ Evaluation/Operator</td>
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<td>16. Employee Involvement</td>
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Again, those best practices are expected to be observed in a well-performing factory. Some of the tactics and best practices are direct matches, for example, value-stream analysis, balancing the line, and breakthrough process redesign. Some of the others complement or otherwise address the tactics. Employee involvement, for example, has to be incorporated into all of the nine tactics in order for us to achieve success.

We then incorporate the sixteen best practices of Lean with the Baldrige framework. For example, the employee involvement best practice aligns very well with items 1.1, senior leadership, and 5.1, organizational management and work. Item number 9, safety, integrates well with criterion 5.3, employee well-being and satisfaction. The rest of the best practices align very well overall with category 6, process management. Lean and Baldrige are a great fit.

Process improvements from both Baldrige and Lean helped us achieve our strategic objectives, strategic imperatives, and ultimately make progress toward our vision. Baldrige and Lean process improvements are both monitored by our performance management system, which contains goals from the top level that are then flowed down through the entire organization, and by measurements, which roll back up.

In summary, Baldrige is our overall framework for continuous improvement. Lean provides us with the ways to become more efficient. The two work together to drive continuous improvement throughout our organization. Both are assessment and improvement tools. They work together to make us a better organization. We’re on a journey. We’re not there yet, but we’re making good progress.
Debbie Collard is Director of Business Excellence for The Boeing Company Integrated Defense Systems (IDS), headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. Her primary responsibility is to provide guidance to IDS organizations relative to the use of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. Previously, Collard led business excellence activities at Boeing Aerospace Support and before that at Boeing Airlift and Tanker Programs, both of which received the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. She has been with Boeing since 1985.
Richland College
2005 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Winner

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Organizational Profile

Introduction
Stephen K. Mittelstet, Ph.D., President—Richland is a community college that serves the educational needs of the Dallas, Texas, community and surrounding areas. We are inclusive, meeting the needs of students of all ages, wherever they are in their paths of preparation. Our students are true partners in everything we do, including the ongoing design and formative evaluation of their own learning. They are our teachers, and we are both their teachers and their learners. Together we are partners in building sustainable community, both locally and globally.

Over years of development, our college leadership team has created and continues to nurture our unique “Thunderduck” culture. Our programs and services nurture the mind-spirit-body connection and value emotional, spiritual, and intellectual intelligence. Our mascot, R. Mobius Thunderduck, or Moby Duck, like the Möbius strip from which it is named, connects the inner life of mindful reflection to the active life of service to others.

Bringing the whole self to work
Richland’s “ThunderValues” set high standards for how faculty, staff, and students interact as they work and learn together. Today’s world of uncertainty and constant pressures requires organizations to do more with less. Therefore, without a supportive values-based culture, our employees would, like many employees in dysfunctional organizations, simply leave their souls at home. They would play it safe at work, put in their time, go through the motions, and re-engage their whole selves only when they return to the safety of their homes.

At Richland, we’ve created systems and a data-informed environment that make it safe to bring the whole self to work and to learn every day. We promote responsible risk-taking and joy in an environment where creativity, innovation, and student learning are valued—in short, a climate that promotes performance excellence.

Mission, vision, values
Richland’s mission is quite simple: Teaching, learning, community building.

Our mission supports our vision: Richland College will be the best place to learn, the best place to teach, and the best place to build sustainable local and global community.
We all remember this vision, which inspires us daily to be the very best we can be. As a community of learners, we consistently and constantly reinforce our Thunder-Values: Integrity, Mutual Trust, Wholeness, Fairness, Considerate Meaningful Communications; Mindfulness; Cooperation, Diversity; Responsible Risk Taking; and Joy.

Reinforcement of our values starts every day as we turn on our computers and see initial screens that feature a different ThunderValue weekly. This invites us to share examples of these values in action with one another and with our students.

Richland is one of seven two-year community colleges in the Dallas County Community College District. We are a nonresidential campus on a 243-acre former farm site, with a spring-fed lake that is home to flocks of ducks, providing nature’s context for our Thunderduck culture. We’ve continued to grow since our founding thirty-four years ago. (I was honored to be a part of that original team.) In the fall of 1972, we enrolled 3,500 college credit and 4,000 non-credit continuing education students. In the fall of 2005, we enrolled 14,500 college credit students and exceeded 6,000 non-credit workforce students.

Richland is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Our primary focus is helping students successfully complete the core curriculum, enabling them to transfer with associate’s degrees to four-year institutions to complete their baccalaureate and advanced degrees. Through this focus, we teach our students how to study and learn and how to communicate and collaborate with others. We teach students appropriate uses of technology, life skills, how to live purposefully and meaningfully in a diverse world community, and how to be successful global citizens in the next phases of their lives.

Consistent with our mission, we also provide career-related technical associate’s degrees and certificates, workforce and job readiness training, and English as a second language for college readiness. We also provide noncredit continuing-education courses for professionals to update skills and credentials.

We provide many services to support student learning success. We listen and learn from students and other vital stakeholders and gather their requirements to ensure their satisfaction. Our primary target-market student segments are recent high school graduates, current dual-credit high school students, older adults returning for workforce training and lifelong learning, and an underserved population of Hispanic/Latino first-generation-to-college students.

The intent of our students has changed over the years. Our growth is now in college-credit transfers. This growth has occurred in spite of world, state, and community events, such as 9/11, the economic recession in 2001, and the North Texas Telecom Corridor® and technology industry employment crash in 2002-2003. To respond to these external environmental shifts, we increased college-credit transfer hours and focused on noncredit, continuing education workforce training courses.
As mentioned, we have four key market segments:

1. Recent high school graduates
2. Dual-credit high school students
3. Older adults returning for training
4. Underserved Hispanic/Latino population.

Our student mix is now 71% college transfers, 19% in development courses, and only 10% in technical career programs. Our richly diverse student body comes not only from Texas, but also from throughout the United States, and from 131 additional countries speaking seventy-nine first languages. The average age is twenty-eight to twenty-nine. In addition, we have a large segment of students fifty-five and over. Together, our multi-ethnic and age-diverse students build community as they walk our Peace Pole Trail and lakeside paths.

Each of our student segments has defined requirements for their relationships with us. We listen, anticipate, and respond to student requirements according to their different segments, whether transfer or technical career/job skills. We use this information to develop meaningful programs and services to respond to students’ unique needs. For example, course transferability is critical to our transfer segment. To target our recruitment more effectively, we gather requirements from the communities from which our students come.

Four other key stakeholder groups expect us to be effective stewards of our resources in order to meet community education needs. These are: taxpayers and/or government accrediting agencies; other schools, including K-12 and universities; employers of our students and graduates; and our own Richland College faculty and staff.

For understanding our students, stakeholders, and community needs, we have identified seven key strategic challenges critical to Richland’s future:

1. Demographic shifts/limited English proficiency
2. Decrease in technology jobs
3. Underprepared students
4. Students with greater needs
5. Closing enrollment/underserved student-success gaps
6. Increasing faculty and leadership retirements
7. Facilities expansion disruptions

We are challenged to serve the unique needs of a population demographic shift as the number of Latinos (including those without English proficiency) increases rapidly. A second challenge is the dramatic shift in technology jobs in our employer base. Two challenges relate to the growing underpreparedness of our student segment and their increasing need for intensive developmental assistance and services. Another challenge is the growing retirement age of our faculty and staff. And as we enlarge our facilities, our seventh challenge is to minimize construction disruptions while incorporating environmentally sustainable building practices and reducing future energy consumption.
Our culture of continuous improvement includes action plans that allow each employee the opportunity to make significant, visible improvements in their workgroups in alignment with the strategic planning direction for the college. Our college-wide continuous improvement model provides cycles of improvement using the approach, deploy, learn, and integrate method in areas and processes we identify. We also identify opportunities for improvement and methods for improving them through benchmarking and comparative data both inside and outside the college education sector and through the invaluable feedback reports we have received from the Texas Award for Performance Excellence and Baldrige, as well as from various accreditation agencies.

We have an interconnected approach to sharing knowledge assets within the organization. First, we embed organizational learning mechanisms into our college-wide quality enhancement plan (QEP) strategy and into our benchmarking efforts. Second, our Thunderwater Organizational Learning Institute (TOLI) for professional development provides related professional development and follow-up so that knowledge is shared throughout our organization.

**Leadership**

Our leadership team shapes and sustains our culture. We continue to refine the design of our leadership system to ensure an environment for succession and sustainability. Senior leaders nurture a leaderful environment focusing on both the individual and on collaborative empowerment and responsibility.

A variety of councils provides broad based, fluid, cross-cutting input to ensure that senior leaders actively listen and learn from stakeholder groups. Employee and student associations provide self-governed stakeholder input. These associations include our faculty, adjunct faculty, professional support staff, and student government. Most broadly, the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD) board of trustees and our district office provide policy and governance parameters and designated support services. This system serves both our community and our students. Our model provides for the continuous interaction between Richland and its community and students, as we enhance our listening and learning methods, anticipate their needs, and exceed their expectations.

Leadership provides organizational sustainability through clear vision and direction for the future. Using broad stakeholder input, the “ThunderTeam” (our senior leadership team) sets and deploys Richland’s vision and values, directions, and performance expectations through our college-wide strategic and operational planning systems.

Related performance expectations cascade from organizational measures to departmental measures to individual action plans. We accomplish sustainability of the leadership system itself through succession planning at all levels within the organization. Through our annual leadership succession inventory, we are able to match employees with anticipated position vacancies in order to cross-train and
offer professional development. Richland’s fertile training ground for future leaders has launched twenty-two higher education CEOs from among our employee ranks throughout our thirty-four-year history.

To support an environment of ongoing organizational and employee learning, ThunderTeam established annual professional development requirements, and 98% of employees now exceed those minimum requirements.

Leadership for sustainability also requires that we prepare for disasters with disaster recovery plans and financial emergency strategies. We accomplish this through emergency preparedness plans and by ensuring our fiscal stability through financial reserves, audits, and bond ratings.

We build leadership governance into our leadership system. The board of trustees holds the CEO accountable and the CEO and ThunderTeam hold the college accountable through policy, training, and audits. Results of our annual external financial audit and our credit rating demonstrate our financial accountability. Ours is the only community college system in the nation to hold triple A bond ratings by both Moody and Fitch.

Ever committed to our mission of teaching, learning, community building, our culture and leadership system sustain our vision that Richland be the best place it can be. Our passion for student success inspires our ongoing quest for performance excellence. At Richland College, we change lives and empower people to realize their dreams and potential as they contribute to building sustainable local and world community for all.

**Strategic Planning**

Kathryn K. Eggleston, Ph.D. Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness & Economic Development—Richland College’s performance excellence model uses systematic, interrelated approaches we deploy in building a pervasive culture of quality improvement. We begin each of our institutional improvement cycles with our strategic planning approach. This activity identifies our future direction and focus.

Each August we review, among other things, our mission, vision, and ThunderValues at a three-day strategic planning retreat. We have purposely refined our vision and mission statements to be focused sharply and also to be easy for all employees to recite from memory, ensuring our alignment to a common purpose. When we stated these core statements clearly and simply, we experienced a fundamental breakthrough in organizational alignment.

The ThunderTeam then charts our strategy, based on our vision and mission.
We experienced another significant breakthrough in our organizational alignment efforts in 1999, when we restructured our strategic planning priorities to five sharply focused goals, later reduced to four. Our employees can also recite from memory these shortened versions of the goals:

1) Identify and meet community educational needs
2) Enable all students to succeed
3) Enable all employees to succeed
4) Ensure institutional effectiveness

We align our budgetary development with these priorities to ensure that our commitments to funding coincide with our organizational focus for results.

To achieve our goals, we set organizational and departmental action plans, and we define our college-wide quality enhancement plan focus—the latter a component of our accreditation compliance. We also create individual employee action plans. We then review the progress-to-targets for each Key Performance Indicator (KPI) through our monthly Thunion report cards and through biannual reviews of departmental action plan results.

We improve key processes in a number of ways. First, we identify the areas to be addressed, and we’ve identified four: student learning, student services, employee services, and support services. Next, we document these processes and improve them using our eight-step Process Implementation/Improvement Plan (PIIP). We then share and integrate our learnings institution-wide through a variety of communication methods, including the intranet, reports, and e-mail, just to name a few.

For the past three years, we’ve evaluated our results in the seven Baldrige Criteria areas through annual applications to both the Texas Award for Performance Excellence and Baldrige. These dual cycles have accelerated our improvement based on each feedback report’s opportunities for improvement. And we have decided to produce a Category 7 results chapter annually, so that five years from now, we will be positioned and eligible to reapply to the Baldrige program.

All these results are the basis for our next strategic planning cycle, which begins in August at the start of the academic year. We fully integrate our Baldrige and Texas award efforts into our annual strategic planning process. They are not apart from or outside of the college’s strategic planning effort.

We use the Möbius strip with its seamless inner and outer connection to symbolize the continuous nature of strategic planning and its fundamental importance to the organization’s health. The Möbius metaphor depicts the connection between our inner organizational work on monitoring the monthly progress of our key performance indicators and quality enhancement plan reviews, and our outward achievement of strategic planning milestones.
Prior to the start of our strategic planning retreat each August, senior leaders review various inputs that help us understand key issues both inside and outside our organization, particularly as they relate to the KPI measures. Inputs include the preliminary results from the previous year’s measures, trends in performance, our comparative performance to selected peer and competitor colleges, internal and external environmental scans, census data, staff analyses, and our recommended operational budget. As we are part of a seven-college district, we review our DCCCD plans and our alignment to them.

In August, the ThunderTeam updates our five-year strategic plan. We use a five-year plan to provide continuity because it coincides with the DCCCD planning cycle and the development of our institutional priorities.

Our short-term operational planning cycle is one year. During this planning retreat, our leadership also formalizes the QEP for the coming year, based upon its alignment to organizational strategy. We deploy our directions, strategic priorities, and institutional KPIs and QEP focus at our August convocation for all employees. These are the key elements of college-wide planning and resource allocation at Richland College.

In September, our board of trustees formally adopts our annual budget. The ThunderTeam finalizes the KPIs and measures for the year, based on the previous year’s results and their continued relevancy to the institution. Once measures are finalized, we use comparative measures with other organizations as well as trends and environmental scans to set the one-, three-, and longer five-year targets. We incorporate in the budget any modifications from the board of trustees and then publish the updated strategic plan and the current operational plan. During the first quarter of the academic year, employees develop their individual action plans while departments develop departmental plans to support the operational plan. Also during September, the ThunderTeam deploys the QEP focus to the employees.

We group our measures by strategic priority and/or organizational objective. These three KPI examples relate to our first strategic priority: identify and meet community educational needs:

- Our state employee charitable campaign
- Market share of service area
- Reimbursable credit contact hours.

Results for the first KPI indicate that our employees continue to exceed our goals, both in overall giving dollars and in average dollars per employee. For market share of our service area, we remain relatively stable over time, but the African-American segment has grown. Our Hispanic/Latino section has been relatively flat; however, we have numerous action items to improve this segment of our market share because the Hispanic/Latino population is growing rapidly. The third example involves reimbursable credit contact hours, which determine our state funding reimbursement. This key measure evaluates our progress toward meeting our community educational needs priority. We are the largest of our peers in this area, and our overall credit contact hours have remained relatively stable.

We review our performance in the above and some seventy other measures in our monthly Thunion report card. Each Thunion report has three layers, which we...
systematically peel back like an onion to reveal the underlying elements comprising each performance result.

The first layer is our dashboard. It provides the overall index score for all measures for the current month as compared to the previous month and the end of the previous year. It also shows the composite score for each of the four strategic planning priorities and their respective weighting. Stoplight colors on our dashboard show at a glance the status of each key performance indicator in the mix. We drill down into each measure that shows a yellow cautionary light or a red danger light. A green light reflects a score between 9 and 10, our acceptable range of tolerance. Scores cannot exceed 10, which would inflate a low score in a roll-up of composite calculations. Over-performance is, however, tracked as part of our internal environmental scan, and when we recalibrate our targets in the next planning cycle, we adjust these targets appropriately higher. We post the Thunion report and the raw data monthly on the intranet for employees to access. We discuss the Thunion report in detail in the “Measurements” section of this article.

During October and November, the institutional research department receives and analyzes the end-of-year results. Prior to any implementations, we review the actual year’s performance in the end-of-year results to update the next calendar year’s operational plan.

We publish the operational plan in December. The document outlines all organizational action plans in place for the coming year and the parties responsible for their implementation. During December, we also publish the official, end-of-year report and any modified operational plans. The end-of-year report presents each measure related to its strategic planning priority and KPI objectives. We again use a stoplight approach to show our results. For the last four years, we have used the updated charts from our Texas Award application within this report because the application was due just prior to this report being published. Again, we integrate the Baldrige model into our ongoing strategic planning process.

During January, the college, departments, and individuals adjust their plans based on the end-of-year results and any anticipated changes to year-end performance levels. Each organizational action triggers the development of one or more departmental action plans. Our office of institutional effectiveness maintains the inventory of the action plans and publishes them to all employees on the intranet.

In February and March, ThunderTeam examines the midyear update information from departments during the midyear review of departmental actions. We post these updates on the intranet for all employees to see their alignment with organizational plans. Based on findings from the midyear review, the ThunderTeam issues operational planning and budgeting guidelines to department leaders. These leaders then begin the process of creating the next year’s action plans and budget requests. In May, the expanded ThunderTeam reviews all reporting area requests and college-wide proposals and requests. They create a finalized, operational plan and budget request for the next cycle of planning.
The DCCCD college CEOs present their operational plans and budget requests to the DCCCD trustees during the summer planning and budgeting sessions. In June and July, the CEOs and the board finalize funding and operational plan approaches. During this same time, supervisors and staff hold progress discussions and review performance levels with respect to goals and targets. The process begins again with the August preparation and the strategic planning sessions.

One of our key strengths is in gathering and using information from students, stakeholders, and internal and external scans to identify strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats. We also learn how successfully we achieve our strategic planning priority goals. ThunderTeam uses these inputs to understand the external environment through SWOT analyses. We use this knowledge to design programs, plan strategies, and understand the changing needs and abilities of our faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders. We gather information on many important factors, including educational reform, student and stakeholder needs, and student and community demographics. We also collect information about our competitive market environment, technology and innovation, our human resources and other needs, and our regulatory environment. Additional planning input includes our capability to assess student learning, financial risks, changes in the economy, and feedback from partners and suppliers.

We determine our strategic planning priorities based on our understanding of what our greatest challenges are, which we determine by an annual SWOT analysis. Our strategic planning priorities address students and stakeholder needs.

The first priority is to identify and meet the educational needs of the community, which addresses the success factors of being accessible, flexible, and affordable, in order to serve traditionally underserved populations. This priority also addresses challenges associated with population demographic shifts, such as the rapid increase in the number of area Hispanic/Latino individuals, including those without English proficiency. And this priority addresses the dramatic decrease in technology jobs in our employer base, subsequent to the Telecom Corridor® industry’s severe downturn since 2003.

Our second priority is to enable all students to succeed, which addresses the success factor of ensuring all students can transfer to four-year institutions or secure jobs. The strategic challenges we address for this priority are the growing underprepared student segment and its increasing need for intensive developmental assistance and student services.

Our third priority is to enable all employees to succeed, which addresses the success factor of attracting and retaining faculty and staff who are passionate about student learning success and who embrace our whole-person Thunderduck culture. This priority addresses changes associated with increasing faculty and staff retirements and many new hires.

Our fourth priority is to ensure institutional effectiveness, which addresses the success factors of doing more with less funding, creating a culture of continuous improvement, and being an ethical, sustainable organization in compliance with all regulatory agencies. This priority also addresses the challenges associated
with state funding cuts and, as we build our bond construction program to expand our capacity, to minimize disruptions while incorporating those environmentally sustainable building practices to help us reduce future energy consumption. This priority also helps us meet the very aggressive state-mandated targets for closing the gaps for enrollment, particularly for Latino populations.

We deploy our strategy through numerous activities designed to communicate and cause people to align their efforts in the direction of the organization. We can’t stress this enough—communicate, communicate, communicate. We do this all the time.

In summary, we align our strategic plan so all elements interrelate. First we define our strategic planning priorities. Next we set organizational objectives and our key performance indicators, with measures and targets to support attainment of those priorities. Departments create action plans to support the organizational objectives over both the shorter and the longer term. A subset of these plans focuses on student-learning outcomes and assessment of service excellence, through systematic quality-enhancement-plan activities. We adjust plans as circumstances require. Richland’s systematic approach for strategic planning demonstrates the importance we place on strategic planning for key results. Through the use of Baldrige Criteria for almost eight years, we continue to refine our strategic planning approaches and our deployment across the organization. We’ve become more sophisticated in our abilities to project performance and to achieve results. Our efforts continue to inspire our ongoing quest for performance excellence.

Measurement, Analysis & Knowledge Management

Fonda Vera, Dean of Planning & Research for Institutional Effectiveness—One primary product of our annual strategic planning retreat is our measures and targets document, color-coded for ease of reading. Strategic planning priorities appear in purple; performance indicators, green; measures, black; and targets, blue. We use stars down the left-hand side of the document to identify strategic measures or for extra college emphasis. All other measures are operational.

One example of our measures is the number of contact hours we generate through dual-credit and tech-prep classes. We set target ranges for the current year, three years, and five years out. In doing so, we use five to six years of trend data whenever possible. We employ comparative performance data from peer colleges we consider to be best performers. We do environmental scanning both internally and externally to evaluate any factors that may affect our ability to reach our target ranges.

We also look at preliminary results from the previous year’s measures and at census data for our service area, and then we analyze any gaps we find. We produce a definitions document with clear definitions for each institutional measure. We post this document on our college intranet, along with our measures and targets document, for employees to review.
Using the monthly Thunion report, we review performance for all institutional measures. Layer 1, our dashboard, contains the overall college score and a score for each strategic planning priority. We employ the stoplight system, so we can know quickly how we’re performing. A green stoplight shows we’re doing as expected, with a score of 9.0 or greater. A yellow stoplight shows we’re performing less than we expected, but at least with a score of 8.5. A red stoplight shows we’re seriously falling off our target and may not meet the target by the year’s end. This situation requires intervening actions. This process is more meaningful for us because we weight each planning priority for importance. We also include both the previous month’s score and the end-of-year score for reference.

Layer 2 of the Thunion report is more detailed. It has scores for each of our sixteen key performance indicators. We weight all KPIs for importance, and we employ a stoplight system with this layer as well. We use the previous month’s score and the end-of-year score for reference.

Layer 3 is the most detailed layer of our Thunion report. In it, we record scores for all institutional measures and the names of the persons responsible for providing data for each measure. We weight each institutional measure for importance and show the current score, the previous month’s score, and the end-of-year score.

The final part of our Thunion report is the raw data sheet, which automatically populates the entire report. It contains the target measures, the raw performance data, and the raw score. We use comment boxes to indicate when a score is prorated, the last time a score was updated, or any other information the leadership team might need when reviewing a report.

Using the example cited earlier of contact hours for dual-credit and tech-prep classes, our target range for 2005-2006 was 99,000 to 100,000 contact hours. As of November 30, we had 60,544 contact hours. We prorated the score at 40% of the year and had a raw performance score of 15.14. Because no score can exceed 10, we adjusted it down to 10.

At the end of the academic year, the institutional research office generates an end-of-year report. We analyze performance for each institutional measure to indicate the performance to target; we also set the target for the coming year, with a detailed rationale for the new target.

We share the monthly Thunion report and the end-of-year report college-wide and post them on the intranet for all employees to view.

The information management system we use is the COLLEAGUE system, which has six basic components:

1. Human Resources
2. Student Records
3. Accounting
4. Curriculum Management
5. Financial Aid
6. Communications

Communications is the newest module. It allows us to communicate with students...
using their e-mail addresses efficiently and effectively. We can document this communication automatically in student records, and this is important because the state and federal governments mandate certain communications.

Another part of our information management system is our local databases, which reside primarily in the student services offices. These databases are standalone, but we can supplement them with data from COLLEAGUE using our upload and download utility. Individual departments control this information and use it to document service wait times, student traffic flow, and staffing needs.

A third part of our information management system involves the three national surveys we use. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) provides information on a key indicator of student success/student engagement with the institution. It asks questions about institutional practices and student behaviors that correlate with student satisfaction and retention.

We also use the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, which surveys satisfaction with the services we provide. Students rate each survey item in importance and satisfaction.

Finally, Richland uses the Campus Quality Survey to measure overall employee satisfaction with employment at Richland College. Just as with the Noel-Levitz Inventory, employees can rate each survey item on importance and satisfaction. We analyze these three surveys for cross-cutting themes and issues that may emerge.

Each survey has national norms and/or benchmarks against which we can compare ourselves. We also compare ourselves with data from our sister DCCCD colleges and with our nearest competitor to the north—Collin County Community College. We look at data from the state agency on state norms and best performers. We also review data from our students who transfer to area universities, comparing them to other community college students who transfer and to the university's native students.

Various departments—usually our student services departments—also conduct point-of-service surveys and use these results to improve services and processes and identify just-in-time training opportunities for staff.

We use comparative information, both inside and outside higher education. We participate in sharing groups, like the National Community College Benchmark Project, and we also use financial comparative performance ratings, such as Moody and Fitch. When we seek comparative information outside of higher education, we concentrate mainly on organizations that are quality award winners, either at the state or the national level. Examples of these include Texas Nameplate and Branch-Smith Printing. We studied Texas Nameplate’s dashboard and saw how they used the stoplight system and then updated our dashboard based on theirs. We also visited the Walt Disney Company. Disney has a role-model new-employee-hiring and orientation process. Our director of human resources and her team used the Disney model to develop an award-winning new-employee-orientation program.

We benchmarked Branch-Smith Printing for their supplier-partner scorecard. We adapted that scorecard model and now use it with our suppliers and partners.
We conduct different types of analyses throughout the year. We analyze our class scheduling effectiveness, for example, because increasingly community colleges have to do more with less funding. Thus, we must use the facilities we have as efficiently as possible. We track three measures throughout the year to see how effectively we can schedule classes. One measure is to assign classes to rooms of appropriate size. Our target is to be within 80% of the room’s capacity. We’ve improved our performance in this area over time. We’ve met and surpassed our goals, and we’ve outperformed our peers.

We do market share analysis as well. We identify what percent of the adult population in our service area enrolled in at least one course, credit or non-credit, at Richland during the year. We segment this analysis by ethnicity and by income groups.

We track the percent of recent high school graduates in our area who enroll at Richland, and we segment this by high school and by ethnicity. We also look at our enrollment outside of our service area because we know that to continue to be healthy, we must have a certain amount of our enrollment outside our service area. So we set upper and lower limits for what we think makes our enrollments healthy.

We also prepare a monthly employee diversity report by employee group and by ethnicity to track our progress with regard to our diversity goals for the academic year.

We track to see how well we’ve predicted enrollment in various classes. Our goal is to be within 70% of the enrollment we’ve predicted. To date, we have met and surpassed our goals, improved in this area, and outperformed all but one of our peers.

We track the total percent of our classes offered in an alternative format. These formats may be distance learning, flex term, weekend courses, or Friday-night-only classes. We offer classes in alternative formats to meet the needs of working adults with time constraints. We’re projecting that demand will drive the percent of these classes higher over the next five years, so although we’ve offered between 20% and 31% of our classes in an alternative format, over time this percentage will strategically become much higher.

We also do a cost analysis per student and per credit hour and compare our performance to other community colleges that have participated in the National Community College Benchmark Project. Richland was just outside the top 10% in performance for cost per student, and per credit hour. This means, compared nationally, Richland is a very affordable institution.

To keep our computer systems current, we plan for technology needs in our overall strategic planning process. We use a cascading system to replace our computers whereby high-end users receive the newest, most powerful hardware, while lower-end users receive the computers passed down from the higher end. Using this system, staff members have what they need to perform their jobs effectively at an affordable cost. Our servers are backed up nightly through a vendor contract. To keep abreast of technology and make sure that Richland stays on the leading edge, key IT staff members participate in appropriate conferences and workshops. We use this leading-edge technology to work smarter.

We also use our eConnect software to allow qualifying students to register themselves, permitting advisors to work only with students who really need their ser-
vices. We’ve increased the percentage of qualified students who register themselves, and over the last term, we’ve outperformed all of our peers. Another way we’ve used technology to work smarter is with the use of an instructional software tool called eCampus, which allows instructors to e-mail their classes, post grades, make assignments, or have discussions outside the regular class period. This software helps the instructor and student have closer contact and makes the student feel more engaged with the college, a key element in student success. We expect the percentage of eCampus users will increase during the next five years.

Finally, we share our organizational knowledge gleaned from the QEP process, student surveys, focus groups, environmental scanning, and best practices from external groups and consortia with faculty and staff. Our communication vehicles include council and workgroup meetings, documentation, formal reports, and postings on the intranet.

Student, Stakeholder & Market Focus

Donna Walker, Executive Dean of Student and Enrollment Services—Richland College ensures focus on student and stakeholder needs by targeting those needs to our strategic planning priorities. The first priority, identifying community educational needs, assures a balance between various stakeholder needs and our targeted market interactions. The second priority, enabling all students to succeed, focuses on our primary mission of offering programs and services that enable students to achieve their educational goals, become lifelong learners, community builders, and global citizens.

The state of Texas defines our programs and responsibilities. At Richland, we ensure any adult can enroll, express educational goals, and attain those goals. Our board of trustees determines our service area: northeast Dallas, Richardson, and Garland, Texas. Throughout the year, senior leaders gather information about internal and external environmental issues to ensure Richland’s strategic planning and priorities align with community needs and our responsibilities as a community college.

We use data from various student and stakeholder groups to identify our specific student and market segments. To further define these segments, we explore and analyze our changing community needs. Through this analysis, we focus on student segments defined by areas that provide the greatest service to our community, such as transfer education and technical programs and job skills for workforce development.

We further segment the students we serve for the purpose of identifying common needs for program design and services. We perform targeted marketing in selected markets to evaluate the satisfaction among segments. We also use other segmentation, such as age, gender, and ethnic diversity for analysis, marketing, and program design.

Our largest percentage of students is transfer students, compared to those who are in technical/occupational, developmental, and continuing-education-reimbursable...
courses. This percentage continues to grow as the needs of our community change. The 9/11 terrorist disaster caused tighter immigration laws and, thus, decreased enrollment of international students. The collapse of the Telecom Corridor® affected our computer technology class enrollment, and changes to state regulations temporarily reduced our contact hours for developmental classes.

Enrollment has grown

Our comparative fall credit-enrollment growth demonstrates our effective relationships with students and stakeholders. Enrollment has grown significantly, partially due to population growth, but also due to 1) how we care for students, 2) our external relationships, and 3) our innovative programs and services.

Recruiting Hispanic/Latino population is key challenge

Based on our strategic planning priority of enabling all students to succeed, we target specific student populations for recruitment in our programs and services. Because we identified one of these segments, the Hispanic/Latino population, as a key strategic challenge, we employ targeted initiatives to recruit and retain these students.

Students help design programs

In addition, we use funds from federal and other grants to develop and deliver special programs designed to help students succeed in high school and college. Program developers include students and other educational providers in our service area or within our district. They design specific courses through focus groups, special discussions, and formal articulation agreements.

We offer our May term, winter term, and summer classes to attract reverse transfer students who are home from their institutions during those times. In addition, we create technical/occupational job skill programs for workforce development to meet community and employer needs for a skilled workforce. We conduct environmental scans and focus groups to determine stakeholder needs and requirements.

Once our programs are in place, we learn from our advisory groups in these areas. In this way, we stay in touch with students and stakeholders and remain current and proactive in our offerings. By offering programs in our target markets, we succeed in recruiting and retaining the students we can best serve.

Listening, learning, and using information

To listen and learn, we use various systematic approaches to communicate with our students and stakeholders. Figure 1, on the next page, shows some listening and learning avenues.

One vital source of feedback comes from the focus groups we conduct with former students. We rely on comments about the Richland experience and use them as a source of information concerning the needs of future students. This information helps us meet the unique needs and challenges of our community.

Our involvement with citizens, community groups, and other educational organizations helps us prepare our students for the future because we understand the changing environment they will enter. We have recently added a blog to our home page, which allows stakeholders to ask questions, share ideas, and submit complaints. We quarterly share information we have obtained with leadership, councils, faculty, and academic advisors.
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Leaders use the results to become more student and stakeholder focused and to better satisfy student and stakeholder needs. We use these inputs to set direction, improve programs and services, develop initiatives, and improve processes.

In cooperation with service area high schools and businesses, Richland conducts college fairs and job fairs. We also have open-house activities for transfer students and those interested in our dual-credit program. Staff members in our emeritus office work with senior-citizen and independent-living centers to develop programs for the fifty-five and older segment of our adult population.

To meet the needs of our community, we have added outreach staff to work with our African-American and Hispanic/Latino target segments. We provide scholarships to students through our Rising Star program. We have also gathered college employees to create Los Patos Listos, a group of individuals that primarily assists with recruitment and retention efforts focused on our Hispanic/Latino population.

One key performance indicator under the strategic planning priority of identifying and responding to community needs is tracking the percentage of high school students in our service area who enroll at Richland within one year of their graduation from high school. High school programs provide a key area in student and stakeholder relationship development. The dual-credit program, initiated in 1989, allows home-school students across the county and students in our service area high schools to fulfill the necessary requirements for high school graduation and receive credits toward an associate’s degree. To further support this area, we added a second full-time administrator to coordinate a more aggressive dual-credit program.

We have four key stakeholder groups that we listen to and learn from in order to ensure student success:

- Governing/accrediting groups representing our taxpayers. Members of this group include the Dallas County Community College Board of Trustees, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. We listen and learn from these various stakeholders through communication methods, such as public policies and records, stated guidelines, web pages, and community forums.
We build relationships with students and stakeholders through four general approaches:

1. Ongoing meetings and interactions.
2. Special programs and services.
3. E-mail correspondence and newsletters.
4. Joint activities.

We design these approaches to attract students, retain them, enhance their performance, meet their expectations for learning, and satisfy their needs. As we meet and exceed their expectations they, in turn, provide positive referrals by word-of-mouth and through community participation.

Through partnerships and targeted activities with our ISDs, home-schoolers, and upstream universities, we meet and inform students, parents, and high school and university personnel about the opportunities we offer. We strive to develop lifelong relationships with these groups.

Our relationships, visibility, and leadership concerning area employers, businesses, and the community enable us to contribute to our constituents’ success and growth as we maintain a reputation as an active, ethical, and engaged organization. Students participate in councils, advisory groups, focus groups, and other communication vehicles that help strengthen our relationships.

We work with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools on projects and activities that involve shaping future accreditation criteria, allowing us to remain at the forefront of accreditation issues. We participate with the Texas Education Higher Education Coordinating Board and other colleges to design innovative services and programs.

Our student code of conduct outlines formal grievance procedures for students to lodge complaints against faculty, staff, or other students. Similar policies govern employee complaints. We also identify complaints through other means, such as surveys, individual contact with employees, e-mails, letters, and phone calls.

Based upon the type of issue, the person receiving the complaint reports the issue to the appropriate department or to the ThunderTeam for action. Our system allows any student or stakeholder receiving unsatisfactory service to identify the issue and, in turn, offer suggestions for remedying it. We then forward the complaint to
the appropriate department, which reviews the issues, recommends the steps to be taken, and develops the process improvement plan. We communicate improvements resulting from complaints through one of several mechanisms. These include our employee newsletter, e-mails, and the Process Implementation/Improvement Plans posted on the intranet.

We look at student and stakeholder satisfaction many different ways, including through the aforementioned surveys. Our student satisfaction surveys indicate five areas of importance to students:
1. Class schedule.
2. Convenience of class time.
3. Quality of instruction.
4. Variety of courses.
5. Intellectual growth.

We follow up with interactions on the surveys. If we determine a gap exists between what students want and what we’re delivering, we develop action plans to implement solutions. We also offer in-course evaluations and share those results with faculty members and supervisors. Continuing education and corporate services departments also offer end-of-course surveys.

We also look at student and stakeholder satisfaction through student focus groups, point-of-service surveys, complaints, and intent to refer.

Overall, we are very pleased that in the last six years we have increased our student retention rate by 6% across all segments.

**Faculty and Staff Focus**

*Patricia Bollin, Director of Human Resources*—We have more than 550 full-time employees at Richland College, and, depending on the semester, between 1,000 and 1,500 additional part-time employees and student assistants.

Richland’s work system is made up of five student-centered areas:
1. Student learning.
2. Student development.
3. The office of institutional effectiveness and economic development.
4. The office of resource development and workforce training.
5. The office of educational transitions.

Supporting these areas are financial services, facilities, employee services, and professional development.

Our first step in the journey of employee success begins with providing our employees with an environment that incorporates initiative and innovation in all our work systems. We believe employee success begins with the search process and continues throughout the life cycle of the position and employment years.
Our cross-functional hiring teams consist of employees from various workgroups throughout the organization. Team members are at different stages of their employment at Richland College, and they are diverse in ethnicity and gender. We use hiring teams for all full-time-position searches.

To ensure our employees are successful, we also recognize they need accurate, current job descriptions. We review our job descriptions on a schedule, and if a vacancy occurs, we again review the job description to ensure it reflects what we truly need.

Additionally, we recognize that renewal energizes us. We have several programs for renewal, including sabbaticals, which are paid leaves for eligible employees, such as faculty and administrators. We also have a leave banking program that allows faculty to take a paid leave they have previously banked as salary for extra-service classes.

Prior to retirement, we openly discuss succession planning for the position.

Our innovative approaches have allowed us to create new positions to meet the needs of our enrollment and environmental scanning forecasts yet stay within our budget. We survey, measure, and set key performance indicators to assure us we are proactively listening to our employees.

Richland College capitalizes on diversity

Our faculty, staff, and students are very diverse. Understanding this, our leadership decided to require all full-time faculty and staff to attend multi-year intercultural competence training. We also provide numerous other culturally sensitive programs and services.

We base the effectiveness of our work systems on our ability to work together and to value one another. We convey this message to our applicants during the search process. We provide each applicant with Richland’s ThunderDocuments, which affirm our values. We believe our ThunderValues ground us in our work.

Communication is critical to success

We understand how critical communications are to the success of any organization. At Richland College, we want our Thunderducks to know what we are doing and accomplishing. Listed below are a few of the avenues we use to make that information accessible to everyone:

- Convocation
- Committees and councils
- Listening outposts
- E-mail/blogs
- College website
- Student publications
- Surveys/focus groups

Communication starts with the interviewing process and carries into the new employee orientation for our newest Thunderducks.

Performance management

The next step in communications moves into performance management, answering the question “How am I doing?” We use a progress discussion process with our staff. This discussion/evaluation process focuses on performance enhancement to im-
prove student learning and aligns with our organizational direction and attainment of our organizational action plans. We discuss professional development needs and opportunities at this time and identify them as part of the plan. The progress discussion lives as an open document and continues throughout the year between employee and supervisor. It recognizes accomplishments and outlines additional professional-development opportunities.

Our faculty members receive a one-year contract the first three years of their employment at Richland College. We evaluate them annually, and a developmental plan is part of their evaluation. After the third year of their employment, faculty are eligible for three-year contracts. We evaluate our faculty with three-year contracts biannually, however, all faculty complete individual action plans annually. We expect all faculty, administrators, and professional support staff to participate in QEP activities annually. We document their participation on their professional development transcripts through TOLI.

We also celebrate and recognize our outstanding Thunderducks. We believe in saluting the success of individuals and teams at all levels of the organization. We use numerous informal, immediate-feedback opportunities and approaches, and we also have more formal awards, such as employee of the month, an excellence in teaching award, and an innovation of the year award. We do all this without incentives, bonuses, or merit increases.

We invest in new employees, recognizing that hiring and training new employees is an investment in our future. We want to make sure our employees are grounded in the history, values, and philosophy of Richland College; therefore, we work with them to ensure they become immersed in our unique Thunderduck culture. Nevertheless, resignations and vacancies do occur. At that time, the supervisor and ThunderTeam review the vacancy and job description, allowing us to consider consolidating and revising other college functions that might address our organizational plans for future hiring.

More than 30% of our employees are eligible to retire. We also recognize this number is going to increase significantly over the next five to ten years. This will be a huge transition for us. We need to know how to address this transition and retain these individuals’ knowledge and skills.

We asked the director of our Thunderwater Organizational Learning Institute (TOLI) to administer a questionnaire to all employees, asking what their career interests are for future leadership development. We use those results to make strategic decisions addressing future retirements and the selection of individuals for leadership cross training and programs. This enables us to identify themes for conferences and staff development and for developing new succession management programs.

One key performance indicator measures the number of professional development hours our employees participate in monthly. Ninety-eight percent of our employees meet or exceed the target annually. Originally when we deployed the program, we asked them to participate in seventeen hours a year. We’ve increased that over the
Supervisors are a key factor in our employees’ success, so we have designated annual training requirements for them. Again, we monitor to ensure the supervisors involved in the training have the groundwork necessary for success in their jobs. We expect, and we get, 100% participation. Our TOLI office communicates and coordinates our training needs. TOLI is also responsible for coordinating the communication of those programs back to the employees and supervisors.

Education is our business, and we want to ensure we meet the educational needs of our staff. Therefore, supervisors schedule training so employees can develop the new, necessary skills they need to perform their jobs at our level of expectation, and they immediately reinforce this with on-the-job training. The supervisor also documents the employee’s professional development as part of the evaluation process.

Part of training is the transferring of knowledge as our long-term employees prepare to retire. We take advantage of two of our district programs to help us retain the knowledge and experience of long-term employees. The first is a visiting scholar program, which lets us train a potential understudy for up to two years. The second is a phased faculty program, which allows us to retain faculty that retire on a part-time, 49%, three-year contract. Phased faculty retirees use this time to transfer knowledge and skills and assist other employees with the knowledge they have accumulated during their employment history.

How else do we help our employees be successful? Our employees said they wanted a safe, healthy, work environment. We listened, and we provide a safe environment. Our campus safety officer works with our police, health center, mailroom center, TOLI, ThunderTeam, and other appropriate groups to provide training, draft safety procedures, and coordinate emergency preparedness.

Our campus police department is made up of licensed Texas police officers who patrol our campus 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Richland’s police also pioneered a bicycle patrol, which is very successful.

Richland is also dedicated to whole person health. Part of our Thunder Wellness program involves a full blood chemistry analysis. We have a well-equipped fitness center for our students, employees, and community, and we offer seminars to encourage whole-person health—mind, body, and spirit—among our students, employees, and others. Of course, we monitor this, checking participation rates through our KPIs.

Two words that are absolutely critical in today’s environment are “emergency pre-
paredness.” Our employees want and need to know they are safe at work and have a plan for emergencies and disasters. Procedures appear in every classroom and office on campus. Our chief safety officer organizes and conducts audits. We have campus safety watch members, representatives across our campus who meet with our police officers. They review important crime issues and statistics and develop strategies for protection. Our rapid response team has representation from every building on campus, and the members receive emergency and special training.

Our district offers cafeteria style benefits. Our insurance and retirement programs are administered through the state of Texas, and we are responsible for enrollment. We also have excellent sick, vacation, holiday, and time-away benefits plans for our employees, including fourteen paid holidays and two days of personal leave. We also have an employee assistance program for those who require some confidential counseling to be successful not only in their role as employee but also in their role as parent. Employees can contribute a part of their earned sick leave to a sick-leave pool. We use those hours to assist new employees who are facing catastrophic illnesses and have insufficient accrued leave to receive pay for their absences. Also, we allow our supervisors to work with our employees to accommodate flexible scheduling needs.

Our campus quality survey is our primary quality strategy for determining faculty and staff well-being and satisfaction. This employee survey is conducted anonymously every two years. Our ThunderTeam uses this information to design relevant key performance indicators. Currently our KPIs track information about professional development, diversity, satisfaction with recognition programs, and safety issues. Additionally, we have operational measures that include specific professional development activities, number of resignations, and lost vacation days, which could indicate overall satisfaction and mind/body wellness.

Our ThunderTeam reviews these KPIs and measures monthly and benchmarks against colleges and other Baldrige organizations. If we identify issues in that review, we use focus groups to provide actionable information to assist us in addressing the issue of concern. Our Listening Outpost is another avenue of information gathering regarding satisfaction with our performance at Richland. It offers our students, employees, and community members an informal opportunity to share their issues, concerns, and compliments with our senior leaders.

In addition, we measure employees’ expectations and satisfaction. We want to know every day how we are doing. A critical aspect of employment is determining why good people leave. We want to know who is leaving, how long they have worked for us, and why they are leaving. Our turnover remains low. With our proactive and sincere commitment to professional development, we occasionally lose our employees to other colleges in our district and to businesses as a result of their acquired skills and knowledge.
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Process Management

Jean Conway, Vice President for Student Learning—Our learning-centered processes are those that communicate directly with students and accomplish our mission and purpose. We have identified key student-learning-centered processes and student-services processes. Student-learning-centered processes are:

- Curriculum Design
- Education Delivery
- Education Effectiveness Evaluation and Improvement

Student-services processes include:

- Advising and Assessment
- Financial Aid
- Career Placement Services
- Admissions/Student Records
- Library
- College Police

Having these key processes selected and defined allows us to prioritize resources for greatest impact. Our process requirements come from listening to students and stakeholders. These processes also incorporate organizational KPIs as performance requirements for our learning-centered processes.

For example, our curriculum design process has these requirements and key measures:

- Appropriate use of learning techniques and technology
- Satisfaction of student/stakeholder requirements
- Inclusion of regulatory requirements

The key measures for the first requirement are:

- Student success for all student groups
- Compliance to requirements

And for the second and third:

- Compliance to requirements

We have curriculum designers responsible for using the above process.

Two additional key processes are 1) delivery of education and 2) evaluation of the effectiveness of education. Requirements for these processes include meeting the requirements outlined in curriculum design, continuously improving the success of students, and assessing student-learning outcomes. Key measures for these processes are student success for all student groups and stakeholder satisfaction.

We look at the credit or core percent of A, B, or C grades. Of course, we are a college that assigns grades. This is one way we monitor student learning. However, we evaluate student success in learning in two ways: 1) classroom grade performance, a leading indicator, and 2) attainment of student educational goals, a lagging indi-
As many know from their own college experience, everyone’s educational goals are not exactly the same. Sometimes it’s one course; sometimes it’s a degree; sometimes it’s training. Thus, we have to look at the student’s educational goals; it’s not just sending everyone out to get an A, B, or C, and then moving them along to a degree program.

We have improved student grade performance since 1999. To validate that success, we compare grade performance to peer colleges. We have consistently outperformed two peer colleges, and, in 2004, we exceeded peer number 3, a best-in-class benchmark performer in this area.

Credit grade performance shows continued improvement in transfer courses, our largest student segment. We’ve actually rebounded from a decrease in the underprepared segment in 2003-2004. We attribute this to a change in state requirements, which had previously mandated remediation.

What about our student satisfaction with instruction? The Noel-Levitz survey allows students to tell us what they think of our instruction. It helps us measure the effectiveness of our education processes and our students’ support processes. We have another survey called the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), which indicates student engagement in their education and various types of learning interactions. We share this data with twenty-one colleges in the National Community College Benchmark Project. We consider them best-in-class colleges, and our results compare favorably.

The additional learning-centered processes have similarly defined requirements and measures. We use them to manage these processes daily.

We have a specific design-and-development process for new academic credit courses. The process identifies key student requirements early on and incorporates these into program design. Our cycles of improvement include feedback from designers, students, and other stakeholders. We lead our district in making process improvements, in streamlining curriculum approval, and in compliance timelines.

We identify the need for new courses in a number of ways. We receive approval to develop and teach general credit courses through identification of pre-existing courses in the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Academic Course Guide Manual, or ACGM. It lists approved courses any college can offer as new courses. If it appears in the ACGM, we can offer that course and begin developing it along those guidelines.

We also have the flexibility to request what we call a unique need course. If the course is not in the ACGM but we can validate our unique need for it, we can request it. For example, we had a large group of students from Vietnam, and, in turn, the community needed to learn Vietnamese. Such a course was not in the ACGM, so we applied to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to get unique need approval to teach the Vietnamese language as a credit course. They granted our request.

In this process, we also look at the feasibility or desirability of courses. We deter-
mine this by looking at the potential number of enrollees and also at the four-year institutions that accept graduates from the course or program. We also conduct a cost/benefit analysis to determine if we are able to invest in this program or course. Once we determine the course is feasible or desirable, research continues. Throughout the process, we discuss with subject matter experts the desired outcomes of the courses. Then we move to the approval process. Curriculum revision and development is a complex process at Richland because each of the seven DCCCD colleges is separately accredited, yet we are required to have a standard curriculum. Therefore, the district curriculum committees have to manage curriculum revisions and seek approval by the seven DCCCD colleges. Faculty subject-matter experts man these discipline-specific curriculum committees.

Then we move to the actual design process. Lead faculty members design the course, including the desired outcomes, delivery modes, objectives, learning materials, and evaluations. Next, the development occurs. Faculty develop a syllabus incorporating the course outline, the calendar, class policies, and other data, such as contact information, the sequence of teaching methods, and formative and summative assessments for the course.

Once we implement the course, we begin assessing achievement of outcomes, and we look at student success through various measures.

This summarizes our process for credit curriculum development and revision. We also offer technical occupational courses, and our processes for designing and developing these are similar to those for developing our credit courses. However, when we develop a technical occupational program, it typically is a full program—two or more courses—as opposed to a single course. So we have a vigorous process allowing for development of entire programs.

Our culture provides for ongoing process improvement. Learning-centered processes use a variety of systematic methods to evaluate performance and identify improvement opportunities. The annual program discipline review focuses on improving credit programs to maximize student success.

Workforce and continuing education departments evaluate course offerings quarterly, using indicators of enrollment and cost. When programs score below preset ranges, we use corrective action plans. Monthly key performance indicator reviews provide executive-level evaluation of program effectiveness and efficiency.

We also participate in surveys and in QEP to assess classroom learning and increase understanding of student needs. Surveys tell us about student satisfaction, instruction, and yield specific feedback to faculty. We schedule focus groups as needed to provide insights into the survey findings. Recently, a survey indicated we had less student/teacher engagement than students preferred. This surprised us because we believed we had good student/faculty engagement. Therefore, we followed up with focus groups and other resources to explore the situation in depth.
One measure of understanding student success is whether students achieve their stated educational goals. Most students want to succeed in core-curriculum courses and transfer to four-year institutions. We demonstrate outstanding success in the number of students who complete the core curriculum, including all of our target student groups. Our key program is our transfer program.

This may differ from our peer colleges that sometimes emphasize their technical occupational programs.

Our students do frequently transfer to our closest universities. Two are the University of North Texas and the University of Texas at Dallas. In terms of grade point averages, Richland students who transfer to these institutions perform well compared with other Texas community college transfer students and the four-year institutions’ native students. Typically, students who began at those universities as freshmen were admitted under highly competitive admissions standards.

Another educational goal for some students is to achieve a certificate or associate’s degree. Another segment of students seeks to gain employment through our technical/workforce programs. Richland is on par for employment rates for these groups of students.

Our key support processes support our learning-centered processes. For example, one key support process, financial services, supports students by ensuring we have adequate funds to handle daily operations or unexpected contingency costs, plus discretionary funds for innovation and strategic breakthrough initiatives. This process requires careful planning and monitoring of expenditures and efficient and effective use of revenues. Some key measures are the number of reimbursable contact hours, percent of budget spent by cost areas, total fund balance, and survey results.

As an indicator of the Employee Services and Professional Development de-
partmental success, we evaluate Richland’s performance in cost management of professional development. We benchmark to the National Community College Benchmarking Project, which consists of ninety-one colleges, pursuing performance excellence and representing top performance. We invest more dollars in our staff development than 91% of this group does.

The Journey and Lessons Learned

Stephen K. Mittelstet, Ph D., President—I’ve been president of Richland College since 1979. This twenty-seven-year longevity is unusual in today’s organizations, including education, where the average tenure for a college or university president is less than seven years. Nevertheless, it has provided a unique collective leadership opportunity and helped create and deeply cultivate a culture of high-quality performance over the long term.
We were transitioning to the Baldrige model in 1997 when we completed our first Texas Level 2 Self Assessment. This was our first attempt to document our approach, deployment, and results using the Baldrige Criteria. It was, I admit, a humbling experience. But undaunted, we persisted, as only Thunderducks can do.

During 1998 through 2000, our senior leaders created our community and economic development council for improved environmental scanning and community responsiveness. We redesigned our ThunderTeam’s senior leadership roles. Our performance-improvement focus included participating in innovative learning approaches from community colleges, universities, and a number of national college and university consortia to which we were invited. We were, for example, the only community college in the Association of American Colleges and Universities Consortium, dedicated to the important role of liberal education for America’s 21st century—success in building sustainable world community. During this time, we restructured our strategic planning priorities—five sharply focused goals we later reduced to four—and began to track our key performance indicators in monthly reviews.

During the 2001-2002 timeframe, we began accelerating our improvements in environmentally challenging times. Our leadership revamped our council structure to enhance communication programs and cross-cutting employee participation. Leadership also faced a dramatic third-quarter $1.4 million state funding cut in 2002, which severely affected our fourth-quarter budget. Yet we rebounded with agility and transparency, due to our well-deployed Baldrige processes and systems. They served us well. In the performance-improvement focus area, we fully deployed both our college-wide quality enhancement planning process that emphasized student retention and student learning and our process implementation/improvement plan that incorporated the PIIP form.

Our student and stakeholder milestones included two distinctive initiatives. To promote environmental sustainability, we partnered with the Dallas Trees and Parks Foundation and Texas Utilities Company to create on the Richland College campus the largest volunteer urban tree farm in the United States. The tree farm provides young trees to regreen public spaces in the Dallas area. Benchmarking the Walt Disney Corporation, we restructured and improved our Thunderstars New Employee Orientation Program that won the League for Innovation in the Community College Innovation of the Year award.

By 2003-2004, we refined our cycles of improvement in each focus area. Leadership engaged the entire college in a substantive revision of our vision, mission, and values. We added the workforce and resource development council to our council structure, and we matched leadership succession goals with employee aspirations for advancement and professional development opportunities. We tracked the predicted retirements of the third of employees eligible for retirement.

Our performance improvement focus centered on our first Texas Award for Performance Excellence site visit and our first consensus-level Baldrige application. In 2004, we were again awarded a visit at the state level and received a second Baldrige consensus-level review. We had applied to both organizations for three years.

Our student and stakeholder focus triggered targeted recruitment efforts toward traditionally underserved populations. Our data-informed focus included segmentation of employee data and analysis of feedback from supplier/partner scorecards.
In 2005 we were named the first—and the only, to date—higher education institution to receive the Texas Award for Performance Excellence. Then in November we were named one of six recipients of the 2005 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award—only the third in higher education and the first community college.

In addition, in 2005, the Texas Education Agency approved us for the first charter high school on a community college campus, the only exclusively dual-credit high school we know of in the United States.

Our processes and systems continue to mature. We have enhanced our feedback management system, including student and employee blog sites. Our targeted community outreach efforts include Los Patos Listos, a college-wide team of more than 40 volunteers for Hispanic/Latino recruitment and student success. Los Patos Listos means Ducks at the Ready, or Smart Ducks.

We currently focus our benchmark efforts in five priority areas with peer colleges from across the National Community College Benchmark Project Consortium. How will Richland sustain its performance excellence as we continue on our journey? We’ve identified our next steps in five areas: 1) Leadership, 2) Performance Improvement, 3) Student and Stakeholder Focus, 4) Data-Informed Decision Making, and 5) Greater Segmentation Focus.

At Richland College, teaching, learning, community building is more than our mission—it is our passion. We believe our Baldrige performance excellence efforts have significantly enhanced our abilities to realize our vision and mission. We share these Richland College lessons:

- Leadership propels and sustains the process.
- Whole-person culture creates a safe place for responsible risk taking and engagement.
- Communication is critical to full engagement.
- Employees make it happen.

Other important messages
- Never be content with the present level of quality.
- Foster and sustain breakthrough innovations.
- Always focus on students/customers.
- Learn from others’ best practices.
- Remain data-informed, not data-driven.
- Quick-fix solutions are rarely meaningful.
- Inspire and sustain passion for what you do.

And finally, one last lesson from our wise and beloved college mascot:

The whole person (duck) best learns, teaches, serves, and leads in life’s journey...

—R. Mobius Thunderduck

PS: Throughout life’s waddles, don’t forget to take flight!

—Moby Duck
Case Study • Richland College

About the authors

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Leadership and Managing Thought

Laurence R. Smith, GOAL/QPC

Have you noticed that there are lots of books, schools, courses, and teaching about management and leadership? Have you also noticed there are many complaints in the world about leadership and management? Do you find that curious? Since there are so many people writing and teaching and speaking about leadership and management, why do we not have better leadership and management in the world? Does it seem that instead of getting better leadership and management we just get more books and speeches about leading and managing? Do you wonder why?

One of the most familiar and popular processes used in management today is the PDCA Cycle. It was developed by Dr. Walter Shewhart, at Bell Labs in the early twentieth century, to more clearly understand and manage variation in production. The cycle was widely popularized by Dr. W. Edwards Deming in the mid-to-late twentieth century. PDCA is about Planning what you’re going to do, Doing it, Checking-in on how things are going (with appropriate measurements), and then studying and Acting on the results to standardize those things that went well (and that you want to continue doing well), while at the same time deciding what changes and improvements you want to make, which then moves you along into planning, in a continuous cycle of Plan, Do, Check, Act. Of course, the assumption and hope is that the cycle is moving us in the right direction.

This all seems to be pretty much common sense, right? But does the practical application of this PDCA process typically begin at what is really the beginning? Is something being left out? Does something occur prior to “P” (i.e., before the start of planning)?

What may be implicit and assumed—but rarely, if ever, specifically mentioned—in the PDCA Cycle is something we really need to make explicit at an early stage of learning how to lead and manage. It is thinking. And not only thinking, but carefully paying attention to what we’re thinking, and how we’re thinking. It really isn’t good enough to just tell ourselves, and others, what we think, and then exert power and influence to rush quickly into getting on with telling and planning and doing.

For example, are there any underlying and unexamined thoughts, assumptions, and beliefs that might tend to move the planning process in certain directions and prevent it from moving in other directions? Can they be surfaced and communicated and tested for rightness?

If underlying assumptions and thinking are brought up, can they be challenged or would that be thought of as an inappropriate or aggressive response to a person because of our widespread belief that a person (including our self) is his or her thoughts? In other words, is it possible for us to consider our own thoughts as being something separate from our self (i.e., that they are just thoughts that I am holding at the moment and my thoughts are not me because I can let them go and get other
Knowing the background

If we really care about the outcome of our planning and doing, and the quality of our relationships, we have to be aware of how we are thinking, and why we are thinking the way we are, because that is what influences what we will see and feel and think and do. There is actually a lot going on in the “background” of our minds as we are living and making decisions and experiencing life. Learning to pay more attention to that background is of major importance in improving our ability to lead and manage and achieve the desired results.

There is a quality of thinking

The fact is that our ability to lead and manage anything in life depends on how well we are thinking. To cite an example, if we want to see the results of our thinking we just have to look at the way we see the world. It really is that simple, though we may not want to believe that. Doing something about it, such as honestly examining one’s thinking, seeing what one’s thinking is producing, and then making changes in thinking to create what we really want and need, is harder.

Leading and managing is a process, not an event

Let’s begin with what is most important and often not apparent. First, leading and managing is a process. Second, the process does not start with developing goals, plans, and strategies, or with making decisions, setting priorities, developing budgets, and determining tactics. All of that comes later.

What comes first is what we may call our “fuzzy-front-end.” We can call it that because we generally don’t focus on it and it appears to be fuzzy when we do try to look in that direction. We don’t focus on it because it is something that we generally just take for granted and haven’t learned to explore and take seriously.

That something is the source and pipeline for how we approach all of the Plan Do Check Act decisions that we make. Like an underground reservoir, there is something that flows from somewhere deep within us. This fuzzy-front-end involves our thinking processes and how we live our lives through the energy of thought, mind, and consciousness. We may not pay much attention to this fuzzy-front-end because we have not learned to see it as a process that we can control. Instead, for example, we may go through life thinking that our thoughts, feelings, attitudes, behavior, and thinking are ourselves. And we gotta be ourselves, so anyone or anything that disagrees with the thoughts that we are holding is challenging our own sense of self!

What if our thoughts are not our self?

But what if our current thoughts are simply like the clothes we’ve chosen to put on, and they’re as easy to change as our wardrobe? What if we looked at ourselves in the mirror to see how we like the way we look when we’re wearing those thoughts?

Emerson captured it well when he wrote: “The ancestor of every action is a thought.”
Most people would probably accept that as true, understanding that human beings are thinking beings that use their mental, emotional, and physical abilities to make their way in life. Because of that, it is useful for us to pay careful attention to, and understand, our thoughts and our thinking processes.

Three pioneering twentieth-century businessmen and friends—Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and Harvey Firestone—clearly recognized the importance of paying attention to one's thoughts. Harvey Firestone said, “Thought, not money, is the real business capital.” Henry Ford said, “Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason why so few engage in it.” Thomas Edison said, “There is no expedient to which a man will not go to avoid the labor of thinking.” Considering the personal power available to us through our thinking, isn’t it surprising that people don’t study their thinking and develop it better?

The power of our thinking is not only what it enables us to do outwardly, but inwardly, too. William James, the person considered to be the father of Western psychology, came to the realization that: “Man can alter his life by altering his thinking.” Clearly, the individual that we call our self is a person that with varying awareness of thought, mind, and consciousness, can choose to create the particular human being that he or she wants to be, and to change what he or she wants to change.

Quality of leadership begins with quality of thought

The notion of improving quality is frequently encouraged in business and industry, and this generally involves a focus on production and service processes. It is, however, just as important to pay attention to internal quality. The quality of leadership and management begins with the quality of thought: it ends with the quality of words said and deeds done. In other words, the way we can distinguish high-quality leadership and management from low-quality leadership and management is by looking at the results. If the results of one’s leadership and management are not of the desired quality, one must look to see what thoughts and words are being put into the thought-stream to begin with.

Benjamin Zander is a popular keynote speaker on leadership and management at large conferences for professional and business leaders. Professionally, he is a conductor of adult and youth symphony orchestras, and a teacher of music interpretation, in Boston, Massachusetts. To attend a Zander-led concert is to enjoy a wonderful musical experience and yet, as he says, he is the only one in the orchestra who doesn’t make a sound. To see and hear him speak, and to experience his leading and coaching people, and managing a musical performance, is to understand that performance excellence begins with thinking and attitude—the thinking and the attitude of the leader and the thinking and attitude of the performers, both individually and collectively. It all begins with how everyone is thinking about themselves, their instruments, the music, the leader, the customers (audience), and each other.

I will try to convey the sense of all this more clearly by using an example of Zander’s, which is in his book, The Art of Possibility (Harvard Business School Press, 2000). It’s a great
Example—Leading and Managing Involves Complex Relationships, continued

story in many ways, but for us here and now it is especially relevant because we can get from it a sense of both the stated and the underlying thinking that was going on.

Throughout the rehearsal process of Mahler’s Ninth Symphony with the Philharmonia Orchestra of London, I had been aware that one of the violinists had been sitting in an overly relaxed, almost slouched position. By the time of the dress rehearsal, her posture, still unchanged, was in noticeable contrast to the other players, who were now fired up and physically demonstrative. Although her playing was completely professional, the gut-wrenching intensity of Mahler’s final testament made her indifferent manner, dispiriting in any performance, seem particularly incongruous in this one.

At the end of the rehearsal, I went up to her and asked whether anything was amiss. Her response surprised me. “Are these your bowings?” she inquired. When I told her that these were the bowings we had used in our last performance in Boston, she commented, “The music goes too fast for all these bow changes. I just cannot get into the string.” Since I know how difficult it is to apply a fast-moving bow to the string with enough pressure to make a big sound, I suggested that perhaps we should take a slower tempo. But she was taken aback. “Don’t be ridiculous,” she remonstrated, “you should perform it the way you feel it. But you did ask.”

This was a revelation to me. A player’s outward demeanor, her whole physical appearance, even her mood, were connected to her comfort with the bowings! One should remember that the conductor of the orchestra is not actually playing the music, however attuned he or she is to each instrument—and as a string player, I consider myself particularly sensitive to the physical motions of the bow. However, in my eternal quest to find the right tempo for the music, in my desire to reveal the aching, arching long lines and the turbulent frenzy of Mahler’s expression, I had probably been led to move the tempo somewhat faster, thereby sacrificing the player’s vital kinesthetic relationship of bow to string. The cost was the discomfort and finally the resignation of a valued member of the violin section of one of the world’s greatest orchestras. That was too high a price.

My usual routine on the day of a concert is to go to my room after the morning’s rehearsal and take a long sleep, then shower, eat two English muffins and a scrambled egg with some nice strong English tea, and return to the hall to give my customary preconcert talk. This time, however, it all changed. I went back to my hotel room and spent the afternoon with Mahler’s score, imagining how it would feel to play each passage on the violin. It was obviously not all too fast. Maybe this passage? Maybe that one? At the concert that evening, I slightly broadened each of the passages that I had decided might have presented a problem for Tanya’s bow.

During the performance, I frequently glanced in her direction, and there in her seat was an impassioned, unabashedly demonstrative player totally enraptured by the music. Although we would have played a more than respectable performance without the full participation of Tanya, the engagement of that extra 1% caused a disproportionate breakthrough because once she and I were in relationship, I, too, could be fully present. When I had been viewing her as an unimportant casualty, I had to pretend it did not matter that for some reason she was not engaged. Meanwhile, I wasted energy both watching and ignoring her.

After the concert Tanya was nowhere to be found, but a few weeks later I decided to track her down to thank her for the last-minute coaching that had helped us give such a stirring and satisfying performance. I obtained her phone number from the Philharmonia office and called one morning from Boston to the London suburb where she lived.

Tanya seemed audibly shaken when I identified myself. She confessed that she had never received a call from a conductor at home before. She responded with delight as I expressed my deep gratitude for her contribution to our performance of Mahler’s Ninth. It emerged that Mahler was her favorite composer, that she was passionate about all his work, and that the performance we had done together was one of the high points of her musical life.

The lesson I learned is that the player who looks least engaged may be the most committed member of the group. A cynic, after all, is a passionate person who does not want to be disappointed again. Tanya, the Mahlerian par excellence, had decided to “sit out” that performance because it was going to disappoint her again. I learned that the secret is not to speak to a person’s cynicism, but to speak to her passion.

When I initially approached Tanya—not to reprimand a recalcitrant member of the team for not pulling her weight, but rather with the attitude, the certain knowledge, that she loved the music, that she wanted the concert to be a success, that she wanted to “get into the string” with her bow—I gave her an A. My question to her, “Is there anything amiss?” was a question to
someone I imagined to be completely committed to the project we were engaged in together, someone who, for whatever reason, was having a hard time.

When I returned to the Philharmonia the next season, Tanya greeted me enthusiastically. As a result of my experience with this violinist, it seemed that I had a warmer relationship with all the players there. During the break at one of the rehearsals of Mahler’s Second, after we had been working on the subtly lilting, Viennese-waltz-like movement, I slipped into the chair beside my new friend. “A tiny bit slow, don’t you think?” she murmured.

Perhaps you can see from this story that our lives aren’t a result of just our own individual thinking, competence, vision, and sense of mission in creating performance excellence, although they are important parts of it, nor is it primarily a result of the thinking and demands of the leader, although that’s important, too. Performance excellence emerges from the passionate performance of oneself, each team member, and the team as a whole, and their relationship with the audience—the customer, by whatever name one uses in one’s work (i.e., client, patient, constituent, student, etc.). It is, ultimately, a quality of life issue. Quality of performance, quality of life, include everyone’s competence, of course, but everything it is rooted in the thinking, feelings, beliefs, attitudes—and the relationships—of each person with themselves, with each member of the team, with the leader, with their tools and environment, with their customer, and with the work being performed.

The computer industry uses the phrase, “garbage in, garbage out.” It means that you will never get good results out of a system if errors are put in. That kind of thing happens in leading and managing, too. The quality of the outcome is dependent on the quality of the input. Now the logic of that statement is probably clear, easily understood, even common sense to you. Yet how often do we sadly or angrily thrash around in a garbage-rich downstream location, and rarely make a trip back upstream to change the inputs, to stop putting garbage into the system to begin with. In fact, we don’t even think about it. We may, instead, just look around for someone or something to blame for the unwanted results. We may just order someone to “Clean up this mess!” Why is that?

How much do we know about our thought processes?

As we grew up, we may have simply been told: “Think about it!” “Do your best!” But we may not have been taught about thinking or about how to think about our thinking. We may have grown up with lots of other people telling us what to think and say and do—parents, teachers, peers, media, entertainers, government agents, religious leaders, lawyers, business officials, economists, politicians, marketers, doctors, bosses, etc. We were taught to believe that these people were experts and to believe what they told us. And then we were tested. If we said that we believed it, and demonstrated to them that we did believe, they would use their power and resources to reward us. If we disagreed, they had power to punish us. So we learned, over time, to conform to the thinking of these power wielders. That’s what the violinist in Ben Zander’s story was originally doing, but then Zander used his power of attention, and mindfulness, along with his position power, and made an effort to turn things around and make life better for himself and everyone else at the same time. That is synergy and serendipity, rolled-up together, improving quality of life.
Conformance to habit and paradigm

Conforming to the expectations of others often becomes a habit and then we tend to stop consciously thinking about it. This conforming usually does not include learning how to see, understand, accept, and develop one's creative, independent, and critical thinking. We're taught to live in other peoples' social and scientific paradigms, complete with prefabricated walls and floors and ceilings, sometimes even without windows.

A big part of our development, consequently, tends to be about being taught to live within bounded physical and social systems. We are expected to stay within the boundaries set by others who tend to resist changing those boundaries that they have become comfortable with, get rewarded in, and probably have built very strong habits, thoughts, and beliefs about. From there, it takes some personal strength, will-power, courage, and self-confidence to recognize and break out of ineffective and obsolete paradigms, and create new ones.

What are we learning about psychology?

Let us now turn to and examine some leading-edge movements in mind and thought that may be influencing the direction and content of psychology.

What is thought?

Do you believe that you and your thoughts are the same thing? What if the thoughts that you are thinking about are not you? What if the thoughts you have are "just thoughts," possibilities floating on an ocean of life, and are not you until you make them a part of you? In other words, what if you are more than your thoughts? What if a thought is merely a resource that you can choose and use—a possibility that you've become conscious of through your mind, and not necessarily a part of you until you choose to pay attention to it, hold on to it, and then act on it because you think it's useful (or inevitable)? What if you can let go of some thoughts because you think or feel they're unhealthy and you don't want them? Do you ever think that you can even laugh at some thoughts as if they are pests, or a bunch of clowns running around at a circus?

Paying attention to psychology

One place where the thinking of many leaders and managers has been influenced is in college where many, if not most, college students take at least one psychology course. I took a number of courses in psychology as I was learning to be a teacher and getting my Bachelor of Science degree in education. I can still remember the professor in my first psychology course saying that the purpose of psychology was the "prediction and control of human behavior." The obvious message was that we, as teachers, were supposed to be learning how to predict and control the behavior of our students.

I happened to find that notion distasteful. I was not interested in being predicted or controlled. I was not interested in spending my time predicting and controlling the behavior of others. My interest was along the lines of our university motto: "Let each become all s/he is capable of being." I took that motto to be a mission that would include me and my students.

I also came to learn that there are differences in thought between scholars in the
Eastern and Western hemispheres. The preponderance of thought and philosophy in the Western hemisphere seemed to be more about humans being in control of the world and their destiny, while in the Eastern hemisphere it was believed that human beings were subject to their destiny. Perhaps the real world involves some of both—in some ways we are subject to our environment and are not in control, and in other ways we do have some control over our destiny. And it is wisdom that lets us know the difference.

In the United States, scholars taught that the study of psychology basically originated at Harvard in the late 1800s with the work of William James. In the East, the study of human behavior was known to have originated in India more than 2,500 years ago, and the Buddhist monasteries were universities for advanced studies.

I also learned that, similar to the field of management, there is no single agreed-upon theory of psychology in the US. There are many theories or schools of psychology, just as there are many theories of management.

In recent years a health-based and positive-outlook model has begun to emerge in psychology, and this is a direction that leaders and managers would do well to consider following. Let’s begin with the new Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

Martin E. P. Seligman, Ph.D., is director of the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania. He is currently Fox Leadership Professor of Psychology at the University and former president of the American Psychological Association. His bibliography includes about 200 articles and twenty books, including the best seller *Learned Optimism*. His newest book, published in 2002, is *Authentic Happiness*, about which Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence*, writes: “At last, psychology gets serious about glee, fun, and happiness. Martin Seligman has given us a gift—a practical map for the perennial quest for a flourishing life.” And so, since I believe that all of us, as individuals and as leaders and managers of organizations, want our own lives, and the lives of our organizations, to flourish, it ought to be a good thing if we focused on what can make that possible.

In the preface to *Authentic Happiness*, Professor Seligman writes:

*For the last half century psychology has been consumed with a single topic only—mental illness—and has done fairly well with it. But this progress has come at a high cost. Relieving the states that make life miserable, it seems, has made building the states that make life worth living less of a priority. But people want more than just to correct their weaknesses. They want lives imbued with meaning, and not just to fidget until they die. The time has finally arrived for a science that seeks to understand positive emotion, build strength and virtue, and provide guideposts for finding what Aristotle called the “good life.”

The pursuit of happiness is enshrined in the Declaration of Independence as a right of all Americans, as well as on the self-improvement shelves of every American bookstore. Yet the scientific evidence makes it seem unlikely that you can change your level of happiness in any sustainable way. It suggests that we each have a fixed range for happiness, just as we do for weight. And just as dieters almost always regain the weight they lose, sad people don’t become lastingly happy, and happy people don’t become lastingly sad.*

New research into happiness, though, demonstrates that it can be lastingly increased. And a new movement, Positive Psychology, shows how you can come to live in the upper reaches of your set range of happiness.

Positive Psychology has three pillars. First is the study of positive emotion. Second is the study of
positive traits, foremost among them the strengths and virtues, but also the “abilities” such as intelligence and athleticism. Third is the study of positive institutions, such as democracy, strong families, and free inquiry, that support the virtues, which in turn support the positive emotions. The positive emotions of confidence, hope, and trust, for example, serve us best not when life is easy, but when life is difficult. In times of trouble, understanding and shoring up the positive institutions, institutions like democracy, strong family, and free press, are of immediate importance. In times of trouble, understanding and building the strengths and virtues—among them, valor, perspective, integrity, equity, loyalty—may become more urgent than in good times.

Seligman says the mission of the center is to understand and build the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive. It is believed that people want more than an end to suffering. People want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play. The center’s leadership sees an opportunity to create a science and a profession that not only heals psychological damage but also builds strengths to enable people to achieve the best things in life.

Understanding positive emotions entails the study of contentment with the past, happiness in the present, and hope for the future. Understanding positive individual traits consists of the study of the strengths and virtues: the capacity for love and work, courage, compassion, resilience, creativity, curiosity, integrity, self-knowledge, moderation, self-control, and wisdom. Understanding positive institutions entails the study of the strengths that foster better communities, such as justice, responsibility, civility, parenting, nurturance, work ethic, leadership, teamwork, purpose, and tolerance.

The goals of Positive Psychology are to build a science that supports:
- Families and schools that allow children to flourish
- Workplaces that foster satisfaction and high productivity
- Communities that encourage civic engagement
- Therapists who identify and nurture their patients’ strengths
- The teaching of Positive Psychology
- Dissemination of Positive Psychology interventions in schools, corporations, government, hospitals, and communities

For more information, please see the websites:
- Positive Psychology Center, University of Pennsylvania (http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/)
- Authentic Happiness (http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/)

Meaning and Happiness

There are a couple of issues mentioned in Seligman’s work that could use some clarification: 1. The notion that people want a life “imbued with meaning.” The notion of “the pursuit of happiness.”

The late Viktor E. Frankl, M.D., Ph.D., was professor of neurology and psychiatry at the University of Vienna, and author of the best-selling book, Man’s Search for Meaning. In another of his books, The Will To Meaning (Meridian 1988), Dr. Frankl speaks to the nature of human fulfillment and the need to feel that one’s life has a vital sense of positive meaning:

Man is reaching out for, and actually reaching, finally attaining, the world—a world, that is, which is replete with other beings to encounter, and meanings to fulfill.

Such a view is profoundly opposed to those motivational theories, which are based on the homeo-
stasis principle. These theories depict man as if he were a closed system. According to them, man is basically concerned with maintaining or restoring an inner equilibrium, and to this end with the reduction of tensions. In the final analysis, this is also assumed to be the goal of the gratification of drives and the satisfaction of needs (Page 31).

In the final analysis, the status drive or the will to power, on one hand, and the pleasure principle or, as one might term it as well, the will to pleasure, on the other hand, are mere derivatives of man’s primary concern, that is, his will to meaning…. What I call the will to meaning could be defined as the basic striving of man to find and fulfill meaning and purpose.

But what is the justification of calling the will to power and the will to pleasure mere derivatives of the will to meaning? Simply that pleasure, rather than being an end of man’s striving, is actually the effect of meaning fulfillment. And power, rather than being an end in itself, is actually the means to an end; if man is to live out his will to meaning, a certain amount of power—say, financial power—by and large will be an indispensable prerequisite. Only if one’s original concern with meaning fulfillment is frustrated is one either content with power or intent on pleasure.

Both happiness and success are mere substitutes for fulfillment, and that is why the pleasure principle as well as the will to power are mere derivatives of the will to meaning (Page 35-6).

There is one additional point it is useful to mention before moving on. Dr. Frankl is aware of the popular hierarchy of needs developed by Abraham Maslow, and he writes about Maslow’s concept of self-actualization that is at the top of his hierarchy:

Self-actualization is not man’s ultimate destination. It is not even his primary intention. Self-actualization, if made an end in itself, contradicts the self-transcendent quality of human existence. Like happiness, self-actualization is an effect, the effect of meaning fulfillment. Only to the extent to which man fulfills a meaning out there in the world, does he fulfill himself. If he sets out to actualize himself rather than fulfill a meaning, self-actualization immediately loses its justification. I would say self-actualization is the unintentional effect of life’s intentionality.

My contention that man loses any ground for self-actualization if he cares for it is perfectly in accordance with Maslow’s own view, since he admits himself that the “business of self-actualization” can best be carried out “via a commitment to an important job.” As the boomerang comes back to the hunter who has thrown it only if it has missed its target, man, too, returns to himself and is intent upon self-actualization only if he has missed his mission (Page 38).

**Thought, Mind, and Consciousness**

Earlier I raised the question about how we think about the thoughts we have. Do we think that our thoughts are us? Or is it possible that the thoughts we become conscious of are just part of a continuous stream of possibilities streaming by our mind’s eye, which we can choose, focus on, take hold of, and then use, or let go of, in making our reality, our way in life? There are people in the mental health field who believe that we each create our psychological reality by using three principles: thought, mind, and consciousness.

The West Virginia Initiative for Innate Health is a program of the West Virginia University School of Medicine. Like the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania, the West Virginia Initiative for Innate Health seeks to build a health-based science that goes beyond the typical medical-school model of an illness-treatment science of human health.

William F. Pettit, M.D., is the Medical Director of the Initiative and a professor of Behavioral Medicine and Psychiatry at the West Virginia University School of Medicine. He has more than twenty years of experience in psychiatric practice grounded in the principles of Mind, Consciousness and Thought. Dr. Pettit’s vision for the Initiative for Innate Health is to awaken mental health across the health disciplines and elevate global thinking about the possibilities for human well-being.
The Initiative states that it is dedicated to awakening the natural resiliency and capacity for well-being in all people, and that Health Realization /Innate Health is the heart of its work. It is based on three principles (thought, mind, and consciousness) that explain how the human experience is created from the inside out. The institute’s founders believe that an understanding of those principles allows people to regain a quiet mind and a positive state of being and reconnect with their natural wisdom, common sense, and peace of mind.

Innate Health is understood to be the unrealized psychological aspect of one’s immune system. It is resiliency. It is as natural to people as the physical immune system that we count on to heal our cuts and bruises and fight off the flu.

The Institute’s personnel believe that all people come into life with a natural ability to regain their psychological balance and sense of well-being. They believe our minds ordinarily work in a quiet, positive state as we express an innate intelligence that we experience and take for granted as wisdom, common sense, and peace of mind. When we get caught up in negative thinking or struggle to fight upsetting thinking, we temporarily override or block our natural thinking and positive feelings and find ourselves lost or stuck in stress and distress.

The Institute teaches that we can temporarily lose sight of our innate health, but we can never lose the ability to regain access to it and resume a constructive flow of present-moment thoughts to guide us through life. The institute teaches that Innate health is “like the sun in the sky. It is not always visible to us, and sometimes after prolonged bad weather we may begin to think we might never see it again—but it is always there and we can count on it.”

No matter what we are doing, the institute proposes, we are the thinkers creating our own experience of life as it happens. Although it is now widely understood that people’s thinking creates their perception of reality, it is not widely understood that recognizing the creative process that generates thinking holds the key to mental health and stability. There is a prevailing view that we live in an outside-in world in which people’s thinking “happens” because of circumstances.

Innate Health, in the institute’s view, suggests an entirely different explanation of the relationship between thinking and experience, an inside-out view. Understanding how we think and that we think changes our relationship to what we think (the contents of our thoughts). Our experience of circumstances varies according to how we are holding and using our thinking, not according to the circumstances. As that understanding grows, it opens increasingly sustained access to innate health.

The Institute teaches that there are three universal principles that can be used to explain the process of human thinking and behavior: Mind, Consciousness and Thought. Simply put, Mind is the energy of life, the fact that we are alive. Thought is our ability to create forms or ideas from that energy. Consciousness is our ability to experience what we think as real. In other words, we are born thinking. We think our way through life. We see life through our thoughts as we go, and the quality of our thinking determines the quality of our lives (how we see things moment-to-moment).

Awakening to those principles sets people free from attachment to the contents of any particular thinking with the knowledge that thoughts naturally come and go. It frees people to see their state of mind, their felt response to perceived reality, as an indicator of the moment-to-moment quality of their thinking. A stressed or negative feeling state or state of mind produces a low mood and increasing tension, a feeling of insecurity, or dis-ease. That feeling warns us to allow our thinking to naturally ebb and flow from moment to moment.
to quiet. As people learn to trust their state of mind as a guide through life, they catch themselves earlier and earlier in the process of insecure thinking that can lead to chronic stressful states of mind and worse. Recognizing the signal to quiet down, people can leave negative thoughts alone and allow them to pass. As our minds quiet, our feeling changes and our perceived reality changes. We naturally regain our ability to address life circumstances and challenges from a wiser, more optimistic and hopeful perspective.

Dr. Pettit believes that once people recognize that innate health is constant and always accessible, they are able to navigate the ups and downs of their thinking without frightening themselves with their most negative thinking or deceiving themselves with their most positive thinking. We are able to be grateful in moments of exhilaration and graceful in moments of distress, and to experience the rich landscape of all our thinking as the gift of life. To learn more about this, visit the website: http://www.hsc.wvu.edu/wviih/index.asp.

These innovative programs in human and social behavior are relatively new, reporting successes over the past twenty-five years or so from a small group of professionals. But while change in technology and technical systems can be swift, change in human thinking and social systems can be slow. An expert will see a new technological product and be able to accept and use it immediately. That rarely happens in the behavioral, medical, economic, political, or other social sciences. In these fields, an expert will see something new and immediately doubt and even oppose it. It can often take years and decades for a "new" idea to be "proven" and become acceptable to the rule makers in that field. So if these ideas of Positive Psychology and Health Realization appeal to you, you might want to take some time to investigate and learn more about them. You may recall that the world’s leading medical doctors laughed at Pasteur when he proposed the germ theory of infection and urged his colleagues to wash their hands before treating a patient. For a number of years after that patients continued to be infected by doctors, and some died, because doctors didn’t believe Pasteur. Even today, a leading cause of infection in hospitals is the lack of hand washing by caregivers. So the world may well accumulate lots of proof and acceptance of positive psychology and health realization during the next twenty or thirty years. The question is how long leaders want to wait before testing it for themselves.

Mind and Brain

In their 2002 book, The Mind and the Brain [HarperCollins], UCLA research psychiatrist Jeffrey M. Schwartz, M.D., and Wall Street Journal science writer Sharon Begley (with collaboration from physicist Henry Stapp about how the science of quantum mechanics better informs us about mind-brain possibilities than does the limited knowledge of classic physics), writes: "What we now know about quantum physics gives us reason to believe that conscious thoughts and volitions can, and do, play a powerful causal role in the world, including influencing the activity of the brain. Mind and matter, in other words, can interact."

Modern neuroscience is now demonstrating what [Harvard philosopher/psychologist William] James suspected more than a century ago: that attention is a mental state (with physically describable brain state correlates) that allows us, moment by moment, to "choose and sculpt how our ever-changing minds will work, [to] choose who we will be the next moment in a very real sense. Those choices are left embossed in physical form on our material selves."
Schwartz and Begley quote the twentieth-century German monk, Nynaponika Thera, who coined the term Bare Attention to provide a modern description of the process of mindful awareness, the process of observing one’s own inner experience: “Bare Attention is the clear and single-minded awareness of what actually happens to us and in us at the successive moments of perception.”

Dr. Schwartz speaks of the burgeoning field of neuroplasticity, which is about the ability of neurons to forge new connections in the brain, to blaze new paths through the cortex, even to assume new roles.

The willful focusing of attention is not only a psychological intervention. It is also a biological one. Through changes in the way we focus attention, we have the capacity to make choices about what mental direction we will take, more than that, we also change, in scientifically demonstrable ways, the systematic functioning of neural circuitry. How? By volitional effort, which is the effort of attention. The power of attention, and thus the power of mind, reshapes neural circuitry and cortical maps—and does so by means of what I call Directed Mental Force. We now have a scientific basis for asserting that the exercise of the will, the effort of attention, can systematically change the way the brain works.

We generally think of will as being expressed in the behaviors we exhibit: whether we choose this path or that one, whether we make this decision or that. Even when will is viewed introspectively, we often conceptualize it in terms of an externally pursued goal. But I think the truly important manifestation of will, the one from which our decisions and behaviors flow, is the choice we make about the quality and direction of attentional focus. Mindful or unmindful, wise or unwise—no choice we make is more basic, or important, than this one. (The Mind and the Brain, Page 368-9.)

It is the life we lead that creates the brain we have. (The Mind and the Brain, Page 373.)

We can now begin to consider the practical applications of how we work with thought in our lives and work—individually, and collectively as part of ever-widening sub-systems in society and the world. I will begin by using part of a speech that anthropologist Gregory Batson (1904-1980) gave at the Second Conference on Mental Health in Asia and the Pacific, in 1969, which is also published in his book, Steps To An Ecology of Mind (University of Chicago Press, 2000, pages 490-495).

[We have] a broad conception of the world in which we live—a new way of thinking about what a mind is. Let me list what seem to me to be those essential minimal characteristics of a system, which I will accept as characteristics of mind:

1. The system shall operate with and upon differences.
2. The system shall consist of closed loops or networks of pathways along which differences, and transforms of differences, shall be transmitted. (What is transmitted on a neuron is not an impulse, it is news of a difference.)
3. Many events within the system shall be energized by the respondent part rather than by impact from the triggering part.
4. The system shall show self-correctiveness in the direction of homeostasis and/or in the direction of runaway. Self-correctiveness implies trial and error.

Now, these minimal characteristics of mind are generated whenever and wherever the appropriate circuit structure of causal loops exists. Mind is a necessary, an inevitable function of the appropriate complexity, wherever that complexity occurs.

But that complexity occurs in a great many other places besides the inside of my head and yours. We’ll come later to the question of whether a man or a computer has a mind. For the moment, let me say that a redwood forest or a coral reef with its aggregate of organisms interlocking in their relationships has the necessary general structure. The energy for the responses of every organism is supplied from its metabolism, and the total system acts self-correctively in various ways. A human society is like this with closed loops of causation. Every human organization shows both the self-corrective characteristic and has the potentiality for runaway.
Now, let us consider for a moment the question of whether a computer thinks. I would state that it does not. What “thinks” and engages in “trial and error” is the man plus the computer plus the environment. And the lines between man, computer, and environment are purely artificial, fictitious lines. They are lines across the pathways along which information or difference is transmitted. They are not boundaries of the thinking system. What thinks is the total system which engages in trial and error, which is man plus environment.

But if you accept self-correctiveness as the criterion of thought or mental process, then obviously there is “thought” going on inside the man at the autonomic level to maintain various internal variables. And similarly, the computer, if it controls its internal temperature, is doing some simple thinking within itself.

Now we begin to see some of the epistemological fallacies of Occidental civilization. In accordance with the general climate of thinking in mid-nineteenth-century England, Darwin proposed a theory of natural selection and evolution in which the unit of survival was either the family line or the species or subspecies or something of the sort. But today it is quite obvious that this is not the unit of survival in the real biological world. The unit of survival is organism plus environment. We are learning by bitter experience that the organism which destroys its environment destroys itself.

If, now, we correct the Darwinian unit of survival to include the environment and the interaction between organism and environment, a very strange and surprising identity emerges: the unit of evolutionary survival turns out to be identical with the unit of mind.

Formerly we thought of a hierarchy of taxa—individual, family line, subspecies, species, etc.—as units of survival. We now see a different hierarchy of units—gene-in-organism, organism-in-environment, ecosystem, etc. Ecology, in the widest sense, turns out to be the study of the interaction and survival of ideas and programs (i.e., differences, complexes of differences, etc.) in circuits.

Let us now consider what happens when you make the epistemological error of choosing the wrong unit: you end up with the species versus the other species around it or versus the environment in which it operates. Man against nature. You end up, in fact, with Kaneohe Bay polluted, Lake Erie a slimy green mess, and “Let’s build bigger atom bombs to kill off the next-door neighbors.” There is an ecology of bad ideas, just as there is an ecology of weeds, and it is characteristic of the system that basic error propagates itself. It branches out like a rooted parasite through the tissues of life, and everything gets into a rather peculiar mess. When you narrow down your epistemology and act on the premise “What interests me is me, or my organization, or my species,” you chop off consideration of other loops of the loop structure. You decide that you want to get rid of the by-products of human life and that Lake Erie will be a good place to put them. You forget that the eco-mental system called Lake Erie is a part of your wider eco-mental system—and that if Lake Erie is driven insane, its insanity is incorporated in the larger system of your thought and experience.

You and I are so deeply acculturated to the idea of “self” and organization and species that it is hard to believe that man might view his relations with the environment in any other way than the way which I have rather unfairly blamed upon the nineteenth-century evolutionists. So I must say a few words about the history of all this.

Anthropologically, it would seem from what we know of the early material, that man in society took clues from the natural world around him and applied those clues in a sort of metaphoric way to the society in which he lived. That is, he identified with or empathized with the natural world around him and took that empathy as a guide for his own social organization and his own theories of his own psychology. This was what is called “totemism.”

In a way, it was all nonsense, but it made more sense than most of what we do today, because the natural world around us really has this general systemic structure and therefore is an appropriate source of metaphor to enable man to understand himself in his social organization.

The next step, seemingly, was to reverse the process and to take clues from himself and apply these to the natural world around him. This was “animism,” extending the notion of personality or mind to mountains, rivers, forests, and such things. This was still not a bad idea in many ways. But the next step was to separate the notion of mind from the natural world, and then you get the notion of gods.

But when you separate mind from the structure in which it is immanent, such as human relationship, the human society, or the ecosystem, you thereby embark, I believe, on fundamental error, which in the end will surely hurt you.

Struggle may be good for your soul up to the moment when to win the battle is easy. When you have an effective enough technology so that you can really act upon your epistemological errors and can create havoc in the world in which you live, then the error is lethal. Epistemological error is all right, it’s fine, up to the point at which you create around yourself a universe in which that error becomes
immanent in monstrous changes of the universe that you have created and now try to live in.

You see, we're not talking about the dear old Supreme Mind of Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, and so on down through ages—the Supreme Mind which was incapable of error and incapable of insanity. We're talking about immanent mind, which is only too capable of insanity, as you all professionally know. This is precisely why you're here. These circuits and balances of nature can only too easily get out of kilter, and they inevitably get out of kilter when certain basic errors of our thought become reinforced by thousands of cultural details.

I don't know how many people today really believe that there is an overall mind separate from the body, separate from the society, and separate from nature. But for those of you who would say that that is all “superstition,” I am prepared to wager that I can demonstrate with them in a few minutes that the habits and ways of thinking that went with those superstitions are still in their heads and still determine a large part of their thoughts. The idea that you can see me still governs your thought and action in spite of the fact that you may know intellectually that it is not so. In the same way we are most of us governed by epistemologies that we know to be wrong. Let us consider some of the implications of what I have been saying.

Let us look at how the basic notions are reinforced and expressed in all sorts of detail of how we behave. The very act that I am monologuing to you—this is a norm of our academic subculture, but the idea that I can teach you, unilaterally, is derivative from the premise that the mind controls the body. And whenever a psychotherapist lapses into unilateral therapy, he is obeying the same premise. I, in fact, standing up in front of you, am performing a subversive act by reinforcing in your minds a piece of thinking which is really nonsense. We all do it all the time because it's built into the detail of our behavior. Notice how I stand while you sit.

The same thinking leads, of course, to theories of control and to theories of power. In that universe, if you do not get what you want, you will blame somebody and establish either a jail or a mental hospital, according to taste, and you will pop them in it if you can identify them. If you cannot identify them, you will say, “It’s the system.” This is roughly where our kids are nowadays, blaming the establishment, but you know the establishments aren’t to blame. They are part of the same error, too.

Then, of course, there is the question of weapons. If you believe in that unilateral world and you think that the other people believe in that world (and you’re probably right, they do), then, of course, the thing is to get weapons, hit them hard, and “control” them.

They say that power corrupts; but this, I suspect, is nonsense. What is true is that the idea of power corrupts. Power corrupts most rapidly those who believe in it, and it is they who will want it most. Obviously our democratic system tends to give power to those who hunger for it and gives every opportunity to those who don’t want power to avoid getting it. Not a very satisfactory arrangement if power corrupts those who believe in it and want it.

Perhaps there is no such thing as unilateral power. After all, the man “in power” depends on receiving information all the time from outside. He responds to that information just as much as he "causes" things to happen. He must then trim what he says to this information, and then again find out how they are responding. It is an interaction, and not a lineal situation.

But the myth of power is, of course, a very powerful myth and probably most people in this world more or less believe in it. It is a myth which, if everybody believes in it, becomes to that extent self-validating. But it is still epistemological lunacy and leads inevitably to various sorts of disaster.

Last, there is the question of urgency. It is clear now to many people that there are many catastrophic dangers which have grown out of the Occidental errors of epistemology. These range from insecticides to pollution, to atomic fallout, to the possibility of melting the Antarctic ice cap. Above all, our fantastic compulsion to save individual lives has created the possibility of world famine in the immediate future.

Perhaps we have an even chance of getting through the next twenty years with no disaster more serious than the mere destruction of a nation or group of nations.

I believe that this massive aggregation of threats to man and his ecological systems arises out of errors in our habits of thought at deep and partly unconscious levels.

Clearly we have a duty...to achieve clarity in ourselves, and then to look for every sign of clarity in others and to implement them and reinforce them in whatever is sane in them.

And there are patches of sanity still surviving in the world. Much of Oriental philosophy is more sane than anything the West has produced, and some of the inarticulate efforts of our own young people are more sane than the conventions of the establishment.
When we think about leading and managing our lives, and our way in life and work, it can appear to be very complex and demanding, even overwhelming, if we look at it all at once. Yet we know intuitively that it is possible for us to live and learn and work and develop—and to do it well. For some, that means doing small things well. For others, it can be doing big things well.

Albert Einstein is frequently quoted as saying that one can’t solve today’s problems with the same level of thinking that created them. Perhaps you can understand how our thoughts and thinking and actions combine with those of others, and the whole ecology of the planet, to create our quality of life. And how our thinking and doing is layered upon the thinking and doing of our predecessors. As we dig and excavate, we expose and can see the levels of thinking involved and the results produced.

Robert Dilts has built on some of Bateson’s work around levels of learning and change. In his book, Visionary Leadership Skills (Meta Publications, 1996), Dilts starts out by setting a perspective, a vision, about leadership. He quotes Gilles Pajou, who was CEO of Pharmacia: “Leadership is creating a world to which people want to belong.”

Dilts examines some of the essential skills and tools that are required to bring about change and create a world to which people want to belong, which he calls the skills and tools of visionary leadership. “These skills,” he says, “involve self-exploration and discovery as much as they involve interacting with others. They relate to forming and clarifying one’s own dreams and ideas, sharing these ideas with others, transforming dreams into actions and engaging the help of others to bring dreams and ideas into reality.” Dilts then identifies nine attributes of visionary leadership, adding the caveat that the most important aspect of developing leadership skills involves engagement and commitment. The nine attributes that Dilts identifies are:

- Releasing natural leadership abilities through the identification of your vision and mission.
- Developing and maintaining states of personal excellence.
- Forming effective plans.
- Recognizing and addressing different thinking styles.
- Understanding and managing beliefs and belief systems.
- Enhancing personal effectiveness in communicating and in managing others.
- Exploring and enriching personal leadership styles.
- Giving useful feedback.
- Dealing with cultural presuppositions, organizational ecology, and other systemic issues.

Dilts identifies six different levels of change and influence, dealing with the issues of physical space (where and when), context (the what), one’s inner world (the why and how), and also the who—who needs to be involved. The levels are summarized as follows:

- Environment. Environment determines the external opportunities or constraints to which a person has to react. It involves the where and when of leadership— influencing the external context. The environmental level of leadership primarily relates to people’s reactions. It consists of things such as the type of room, food, noise level, etc. that surrounds a situation. Certainly these external stimuli will affect the responses and the state of a leader and his or her collaborators. One key aspect of leadership skill has to do with at-
Levels of change and leadership, continued

- **Behavior.** Behaviors are the specific actions or reactions made by a person within the environment. They involve the what of leadership—influencing people’s actions. The behavioral level of leadership has to do with the specific behavioral activities that the leader and his or her collaborators must engage in. The specific behaviors that people actively participate in, such as tasks and interpersonal interactions, often serve as the primary evidence for organizational goals. Much of the focus of leadership has traditionally been on the level of behavior.

- **Capability.** Capabilities guide and give direction to behavioral actions through a mental map, plan, or strategy. The level of capabilities relates to the how of leadership influencing people’s minds. Capabilities have to do with the mental strategies and maps collaborators develop to guide their specific behaviors. Simply prescribing behaviors does not insure that tasks will be accomplished and goals reached. The function of the level of capabilities is to provide the perception and direction necessary to achieve particular objectives.

- **Beliefs and Values.** Beliefs and values provide the reinforcement that supports or inhibits capabilities and behaviors. The level of beliefs and values involves the why of leadership—influencing people’s hearts. In addition to developing behavioral skills and capabilities, an effective leader must also address the presuppositions, beliefs and values of his or her collaborators. The degree to which some task fits (or does not fit) into the personal or cultural value systems of one’s collaborators will determine the degree to which they accept or resist that task. Beliefs and values influence the amount of motivation and permission collaborators experience with respect to their roles and tasks.

- **Identity.** Identity involves a person’s role, mission, and/or sense of self. It relates to the who of leadership. The identity level has to do with the sense of self experienced by a group or group members. Identity is somewhat difficult to define precisely. It is more abstract than beliefs and has to do with the deepest levels of incorporation of information, responsibility for what one has learned, and the commitment to put it into action. Identity has primarily to do with mission.

- **Spiritual.** Spiritual change relates to the larger system of which one is a part and the influence of that system on the group or organization. It involves the who else and what else of leadership—influencing the larger system. Spiritual factors come from our perception of being a part of larger and larger systems surrounding us. It determines the overall vision or purpose behind the actions of an individual or organization.

Each of the levels of change, from behavior up through spiritual, involve more systems and complexity as the space for interaction and interdependence grows larger. Effective leadership, Dilts points out, involves addressing issues at all of these levels, whether it is about oneself, others, systems, or goals. This involves what he calls micro leadership at the environment, behavior, and capability levels; macro leadership at the levels of beliefs, values, and role identity; and meta leadership at the identity and spiritual levels. For more information: http://www.nlp.com.

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I have read that Thomas Edison said: “Five percent of the people think; ten percent of the people think they think, and the other eighty-five percent would rather die than think.” Perhaps Edison knew that thinking was hard and endless work. It is work that one has to do both alone, within oneself, and in dialogue with others, and in community.
We’re all familiar with the traditional forms of learning and developing—school, research, individual study and practice, mentoring, work groups, teams, conferences, workshops, writing, speaking, and publishing.

There is another form of learning and developing that has been growing and is becoming more and more popular—coaching: life coaching, executive coaching, professional coaching.

Coaching is widely accepted in athletics and the arts as being absolutely essential to performance excellence. But life coaching and coaching in management and leadership is not yet mainstream thinking in business and industry. It may be that organizational thought-patterns and culture lead us to think that if someone wants or needs a coach to do their job better they must be weak or troubled, perhaps one step from being terminated. No one, of course, would think that of an athlete or actor or any other performer. So why shouldn’t the need to achieve performance excellence in organizations be seen as an appropriate venue for coaching—from star player all the way down to beginner?

There is, of course, the issue of finding a qualified coach and that is getting to be less of a problem. There is an association, the International Coach Federation (ICF), that has various levels of certification. ICF certification requirements and criteria have evolved over the years and considerable training and experience are required for a coach to go from associate to professional to master coach. ICF also accredits coach training programs, and has a referral service on its website.

For more information, see: http://www.coachfederation.org/ICF/.

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He is the Editor of the *Journal of Innovative Management*, published quarterly by GOAL/QPC, an internationally respected nonprofit organization that does research, development, publishing, and training in performance excellence and organizational improvement processes and tools. Before being Editor of the *Journal*, Smith did coaching and training in quality management for nonprofits and local government.

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