



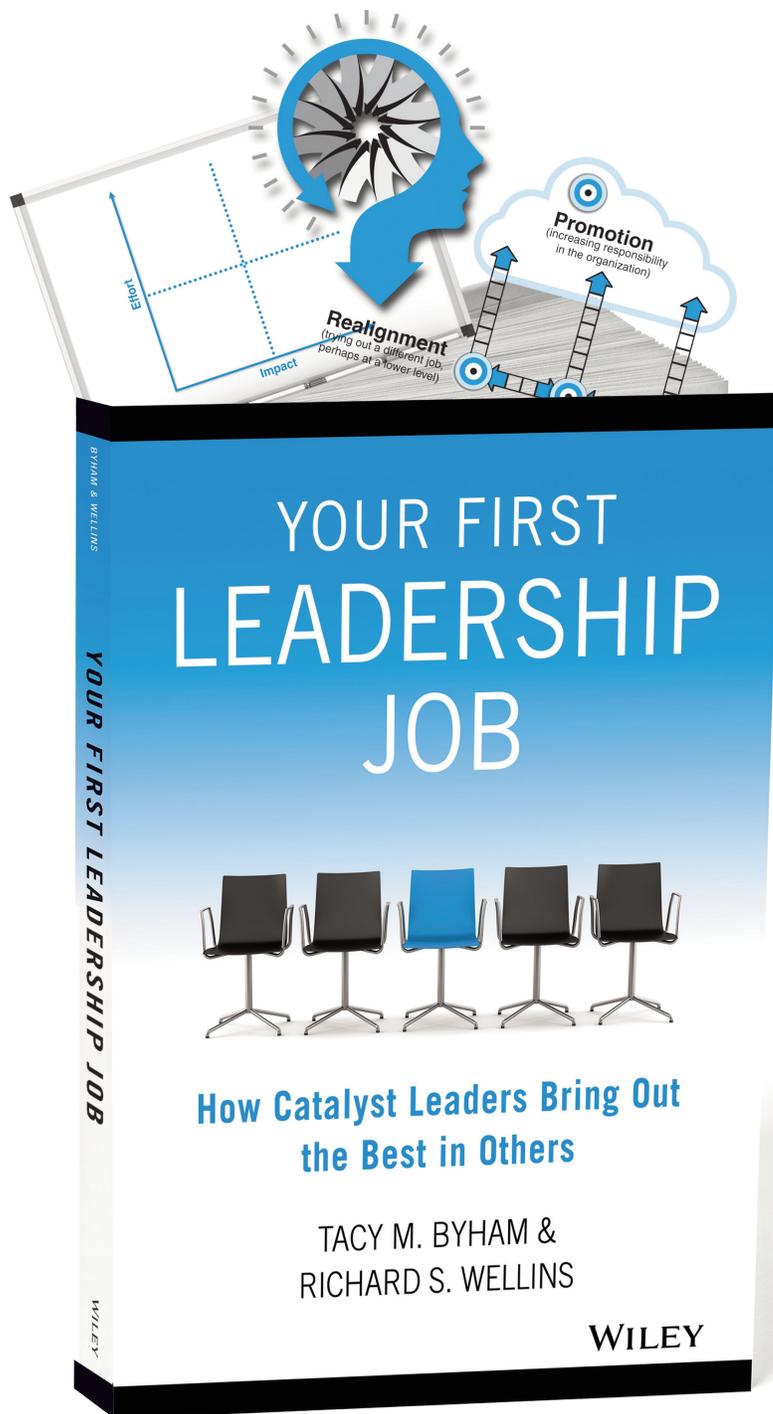
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Change



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Mastery and Leadership Skills

CHANGE It's about People

Pre:Think

“This doesn’t make sense!” “What’s wrong with the way we’ve been doing things?” “This too shall pass!” Sound familiar? We’re sure that reactions like these to an upcoming change have passed through your lips. But now, as a leader, you are charged with being a change maker. With that in mind:

- What can make implementing workplace change difficult?
- Why do people resist change even when it will make their job easier and ultimately benefit them, their team, and the organization?

You’ve probably already received a lot of sage business advice about the concept of change—most of it in small, bite-sized bits: *Change is inevitable. Change is the only constant. Change or die!* These inspirational bandages may be helpful in the moment, but in the long term, they’re not enough.

Change is a constant in business—a good thing. There are business opportunities to explore, new technologies to implement, and different work processes to invent that can save time, money, and aggravation. In fact, you probably started your new job with some potentially brilliant ideas that you hope will improve the way your team works together. But lasting change is tougher to pull off than it sounds. Research shows that approximately 70 percent of workplace changes fail shortly after they are implemented.¹ We suspect the number may actually be higher. And, it’s awfully hard for managers and staff to get motivated when

they believe that the latest project from on high is going to die just like the last one . . . no matter what they do. In reality, the change itself—at least the nuts and bolts of a new process, product, or structure—is rarely the culprit. Typically, things go wrong because leaders aren't skilled in how to implement changes. That brings us to the most important advice about change: it can make people very uncomfortable, even fearful. So, from a leadership perspective, driving change in the workplace is less about process and more about people.

Driving change in the workplace is less about process and more about people.

Some of the most important conversations you'll have will focus on helping other people accept and embrace change as quickly as possible. Obviously, this is good for business. Change can be disorienting and cause a dip in individual or team performance and morale. Your job is to work as quickly possible through the change process to reorient the team. Although we expect that you'll play a role in helping your supervisor, peers, and other network partners deal with any new developments coming their way, in this chapter we concentrate on the sometimes-difficult conversations you'll be having with your team members or other direct reports. If change is a constant, you should be prepared to have these conversations early and often.

DDI's executive assessment data (including over 20,000 executives globally) indicates that a leader's predisposition to change can significantly influence his/her ability to think and plan strategically for future scenarios, and to identify creative strategies for capitalizing on untapped market opportunities.²

People will react to each new change in different ways. Some will quietly ignore it or do the least necessary to comply. For others, it can get emotional. Confusion, anger, fear, and resentment can surface, particularly if changes haven't gone well in the past, or if people believe that their jobs or income are at stake. In these situations, it can feel like a lot of energy coming at you very quickly. Whatever the reaction, it's important to know where people stand as you help them work through the change process.

Figure 1 describes four common reactions people can have, and what those reactions often look and sound like. Use this continuum to help you diagnose where people are before you focus your response on their concerns.

FIG 1 Change Reactions Continuum

Resisting	Observing	Accommodating	Embracing
Defy the change!	Ignore the change!	Just deal with the change!	Champion the change!
<p><i>This change isn't necessary (or possible).</i></p> <p><i>I don't accept this change.</i></p> <p><i>This is NOT a good idea!</i></p>	<p><i>I think I'd rather stay with what we're currently doing.</i></p> <p><i>I'll let everyone else deal with the change.</i></p>	<p><i>This was inevitable, so I'll just have to accept it.</i></p> <p><i>I'm not completely sure about this change, so I'll just have to wait and see.</i></p>	<p><i>This is a great idea!</i></p> <p><i>What can I do to help implement this change?</i></p> <p><i>I'm looking forward to reaping the benefits of this change.</i></p>

We've identified three actions, or Change Accelerators, that you can use to frame your conversations in a way that avoids triggering an avalanche of resistance in others. As you may suspect, they involve the Key Principles (see Chapters 6 to 7), particularly Empathy and Involvement.

Change Accelerators

- **Describe what's changing and why.** When you introduce change, be clear about the rationale behind it. People tend to respond to change more favorably when they understand the business reasons for it, and can understand its potential benefits.
- **Seek out people's reactions and feelings.** When you ask people how they are feeling about what's coming, it helps them feel heard and involved in what's happening. This goes a long way toward building trust and commitment. It can also help you keep the lines of communication open as the change is implemented.
- **Help people regain a sense of control.** If people can identify ways to control aspects of the change—or at least have some influence over them—they'll be more open to embracing it. In exploring the change, ask people for their ideas on how to adapt or improve the change to make it easier to embrace and implement.

A Change Is Gonna Come

Katherine, a marketing executive for a national nonprofit, accidentally ignited a big, noisy mess when she attempted to implement what she thought was a simple change:

It was just a logo and design change, or so I thought. We are a national nonprofit—I worked for the home office—with chapters in every state. All we wanted was to make all the materials that everyone sent out about our programs look a little more uniform. Like we were all on the same team, which was going to make national fundraising easier. The people who report to me work in the local markets, so it was my job to teach them about the new identity standards and give them the new image kits that they should use instead of the ones they designed themselves. The rollout was smooth!

Now, I guess I was naïve, but I was sort of under the impression that when I told people to do something, that they were going to grumble, maybe, but that they'd eventually do it. Well, you'd think we had told them we were going to kidnap one of their children! Not only did everyone complain—"Why do we have to do it this way? We use local designers and images for all our materials, and that matters! We don't want to look like everyone else!"—they organized among themselves and went over my head to the executive director. They complained about the change and me. It was a complete—I can't even say the word in polite company—that's how bad it was.

Katherine made a classic mistake: she assumed that her team would understand and buy into the business rationale for the change. They may have understood the rationale, but they certainly did not buy into it. So Katherine did a good job of “Describe what is changing and why,” but she failed to “Seek out people’s reactions and feelings.” In other words, she appealed to the head and ignored the heart of her team members. You may be tempted to view any reaction other than joyful noises from your team to be a major annoyance—and maybe even a revolt to be crushed. We get it. But taking the time to understand why each person is responding as he or she is will help you in some important ways, not the least of which is helping each one to regain a sense of control versus the change. Strong emotions form a barrier that prevents people from seeing the true benefits of the change. And because they're upset, unsettled, and unsure, they have a greater need to feel that someone is listening to them. Your job is to walk toward the barrier with empathy, not away from it in anger.

When you get to the emotional barriers, use the third Change Accelerator to help people regain a sense of control over the situation. The control discussion

is a simple and easy way to overcome resistance to change. It helps you break down the change into three distinct categories: The parts that they can *control*, the parts of the change or people they can *influence*, and the parts that are already decided and nonnegotiable. By exploring change in this way, team members will see that they can control, or at least influence, a lot more than they first thought. It will help turn them from victims of change to masters of change.

In Figure 2 you can see how Katherine might have broken down the unpopular logo change to prepare for a discussion with her team.

2 Control Discussion

Control	Influence	No Control
<i>Each chapter still can control the content and layout of its written materials. Each chapter can learn the different design options in its own way.</i>	<i>I can ask good questions to help chapters think about new ways to maintain some of their own identity while taking full advantage of the fundraising awareness that a national brand can offer.</i>	<i>Each chapter needs to have redesigned materials by a specified date.</i>

This approach offers another big-time benefit: It lets you revisit with your team members why their jobs matter. How is the impending change going to impact their value to the company? Where is their opportunity to grow? Think of a conversation about change as an engagement conversation in disguise. When you talk with your team members about how they fit into the changing bigger picture, you drive loyalty and commitment. You also can identify ways that you can help them continue to grow.

Use the Interaction Skills

Before people can truly accept change, they'll need to have their personal and practical needs addressed. Use the Key Principles to reach people who need to be heard, feel appreciated, and feel more in control of what comes next. Rely on the five Interaction Guidelines to help you craft your conversations to meet the practical concerns your team may be expressing. This will include the specifics of what they are expected to do differently, what kinds of tools, training, or support they might need, and an agreement on how the change will be monitored.

The Discussion Planner in Chapter 8 is a tool that we encourage leaders to use to organize their thoughts before they talk with team members. It will work whether you're talking with an individual or a small group. The first section prompts you to incorporate the Key Principles—Esteem, Empathy, Involvement, Share, and Support—as you speak with your team. The second section (Interaction Guidelines) walks you through each practical step as you discuss the change situation. Here are some tips for using each Interaction Guideline in a change discussion:

OPEN by identifying what is changing and why. Ask yourself:

- How will I describe the change?
- What business rationale will I provide?
- How will I describe the benefits of the change to the person or team?

CLARIFY how the change affects the person or team. Ask yourself:

- How will I describe the impact on the person or team?
- How might the person or team react to or feel about this change?
- What will I say to seek issues or concerns?

DEVELOP ideas for implementing the change. Ask yourself:

- What will I say to seek feedback about the change?
- What aspects of the change can the person or team influence or control?
- What resources or support can I provide?

AGREE on a plan for implementing the change. Ask yourself:

- How will I ensure they know who is accountable for the change?
- What can I say to encourage contingency thinking?
- What can I say to prompt ideas for tracking progress and measuring results?

CLOSE by summarizing and expressing confidence. Ask yourself:

- What might I say to highlight features of the plan?
- What might I say to check the person or team's confidence level?
- What might I say to enhance the person or team's self-esteem?

If you get stuck with your conversation planning, return to the *DDI microsite*. We have additional tips that can help inspire you to find the right words to use when faced with a nervous change agent in the making.

Citations: **Change**

- ¹ John P. Kotter, "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail (cover story)," *Harvard Business Review* 73, no. 2 (March 1995): 59-67.; Scott Keller and Carolyn Aiken, "The Inconvenient Truth about Change Management," *McKinsey Quarterly*, April 2008, 17, http://www.mckinsey.com/app_media/reports/financial_services/the_inconvenient_truth_about_change_management.pdf.
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Mastery and Leadership Skills

INNOVATION

Be Prepared to Fail Early and Often

Pre:Think

Think of a product or service you recently purchased that just amazed you in a positive way. You said to yourself or out loud, “WOW!” What was it that really impressed you? What was different or unique? That’s what innovation is all about.

If we can point to just one word that has captured the imagination of business media today, it’s innovation.

In fact, The Conference Board CEO Challenge® annual study places innovation at the top of the list for the very top leaders.¹ And, the *Harvard Business Review* recently devoted an entire issue, titled “Innovate Faster, Cheaper, Smarter,” to it.²

It’s a far-reaching concept. Everyone, it seems, wants to be the person who comes up with an incredible new idea that changes the world. And with so many new technologies at our fingertips, the romantic notion of sudden innovative genius that is launched to a global audience of adoring fans seems less like a business fairy tale and more like a possibility.

In reality, though, innovation is not just about the big idea; it also encompasses the many small improvements that can make something better or more efficient. In a book titled *Little Bets: How Breakthrough Ideas Emerge from Small Discoveries*,³ Peter Sims makes a strong case for taking small, experimental steps toward a bigger idea. This approach allows us to learn quickly, experiment, and

refine change. There are lots of definitions of innovation, but the simplest is “a process of creation that produces new ideas that can help improve the experience of your current or potential customers.” (Customers can be external to your organization, or they can be internal partners, like other departments

Innovation is about tapping the collective wisdom of your team to encourage, then refine, their experiences into ideas that can improve products and processes.

who depend on your services. Or, they can be both.) Significantly, innovation is not just about your ideas; it’s about tapping the collective wisdom of your team to encourage, then refine, their experiences into ideas that can improve products and processes.

But generating ideas is only half the battle. You must be able to test those ideas to better identify the most promising ones. Then, you must take the *learning* from those tryouts and help your team *execute* them. You don’t need to invent the next iPhone; you just need to make better—in small or bigger ways—the things that matter to your customers.

Granted, this may not sound as romantic as launching a social network from your dorm room as Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg did. But the new ideas that you and your team will generate can be very important to the entire organization. Small changes over time can add up to big benefit.

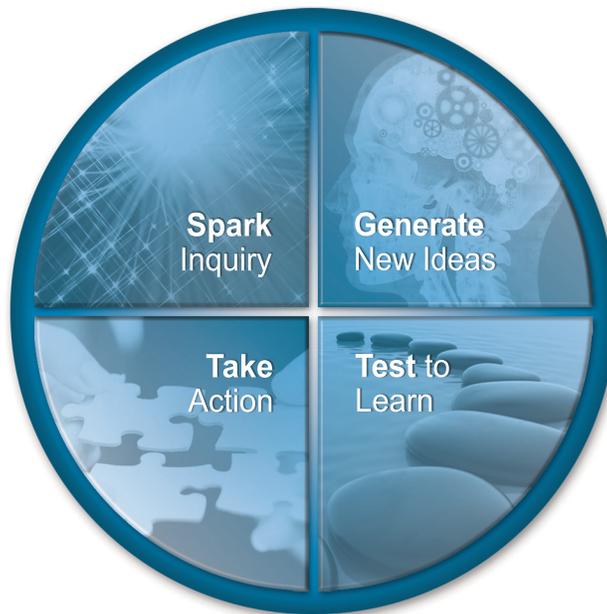
A lot of people think that innovation is just having your great idea. But a lot of it is just moving quickly and trying a lot of things. So, at Facebook we’ve really built our whole company and our whole culture around that. We do things like ship code every single day. And we have this tradition of having hack-a-thons, which are events where all of our engineers and really the whole company get together and stay up just all night building things, whatever they want, not just what they’re doing for work, just trying things out and innovating.

— Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook, from 30-Second MBA⁴

Fostering Innovation

As shown in Figure 1, there are four practices that will help you best foster innovation in your team.

1 Fostering Innovation Practices



Spark Inquiry

There's a traditional view that describes a leader as someone with big ideas, who directs team members to execute those ideas on her behalf. While leaders can be innovators, for a culture of innovation to really take hold and thrive, you must flip that traditional view. You must encourage *your team's ideas*, and the way to do this is by *sparking inquiry*. It's all about helping your team think differently about your customers and what they need, versus what they're currently getting. Part of sparking inquiry is asking provocative questions that uncover challenges facing your customers. It also helps your team members

While leaders can be innovators, for a culture of innovation to really take hold and thrive, you must flip that traditional view.

think about how changes are affecting their customers' goals while they examine their own biases and assumptions about how your business works.

In a study we conducted with both leaders and employees, 64 percent of leaders said they inspire curiosity in others. And 71 percent said they allow employees to challenge the status quo. Ask employees the same question about their leaders, and a different picture emerges. Only 41 percent of employees thought their leaders inspired curiosity and 42 percent helped them challenge the status quo.⁵

To help you out, we've included a tool to get closer to your customers and guide you to *spark* inquiry. Tool 1 will enable your team members to seek answers from their actual internal or external customers.

TOOL 1

All about the Customer

Use Tool 1 to help your team dig into their understanding of the customer experience. (Feel free to add your own questions to the list.) In our experience, opportunities for potential innovations show up almost immediately.

Innovation Topic: _____

Discover Challenges:

- What extra steps do our customers have to take to use our product or service?
- What do we do that delights our customers?
- What is the real pain our customers feel?

Explore Customer Realities:

- How do trends in our own industry present new challenges in meeting customer needs?
- What is changing with our customers?
- What is changing with those people our customers serve?

Challenge Assumptions:

- What if money were no object for our customers? What would they want?
- What can we learn from our competitors?
- What would we need to do so that everyone wants to be our customer?

DDI PRO TIP: Learn to rephrase your ideas as open-ended questions before you brainstorm. Why? Because open-ended questions are naturally positive. They assume, by their very nature, that new ideas are possible. For example, instead of asking if a customer wants to use your new software package for inventory control, ask how they might benefit from your new solution.



Generate and Narrow Down New Ideas

Unlocking Ideas

While your team members may differ in their degrees of creativity, they all have the knowledge and ability to help innovate. And we've found that almost everyone is capable of generating new ideas. There are numerous tools that can help you unlock your team's innovation quotient. Two commonly used are:

1. **Observe or interview your customers.** There's no better way to come up with new ideas than to encourage team members to watch how their internal or external customers solve problems, deal with service issues, or use your products. P&G, one of the largest consumer-goods companies in the world, sends those responsible for new product development into homes and communities for months at a time. In addition to, or instead of, direct observation, encourage your team to spend time talking with customers about their needs.
2. **Brainstorm.** Assemble your team to brainstorm new solutions to a problem, improve processes, or originate some novel product or service ideas. One way to structure brainstorming is to let each person generate ideas and then group similar ideas for further discussions. The big advantage? Everyone participates. When using this technique, go for volume of ideas first and avoid a judgmental atmosphere.

There are dozens of other ideation techniques available. One site, www.innovationmanagement.se,⁶ contains several great ideation techniques, all of which include instructions for using. DDI also worked directly with LUMA Institute, experts in innovation, and can highly recommend their book, *Innovating for People*.⁷ Rich found it amazing to use some of these techniques to generate ideas for new marketing programs. In two hours, five people generated more than 150 new ideas.

Building Stronger Ideas

Idea generation comes with a big downside—bad ideas. Inevitably, an eager team member will come to you with an idea that you know won't work. Maybe it's similar to one you already tried, or it will never get approved, or it will cost too much. Your role as leader is to save everyone the time and aggravation of chasing a bad idea, so you nip it in the bud . . . and you kill innovation. That's right, telling someone why his idea won't work will shut down idea generation for the individual and maybe even your whole team. Dealing with a flawed idea is a balancing act in which you need to redirect a team member's energy and enthusiasm without denigrating the idea. How you do this will make the difference between an environment of trust and openness, and one in which fear of anything new becomes the norm. The tools in this practice will serve as a useful guide to help you deal with ideas, which, at first glance, might seem implausible. Tool 2 includes tips for dealing with flawed ideas.

TOOL
2

Build Stronger Ideas

COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES:	YOUR TEAM MEMBERS WILL:
Seek to ensure understanding by asking questions that enable you and the team to build understanding of the challenges and merits of the idea. Don't rush to judgment.	Know that their efforts to consider new points of view and innovative alternatives are appreciated and that they are accountable for enhancing the idea.
Recognize the positive contribution by stating something favorable about the idea. For example, reinforce that identifying a business need and an opportunity for innovation are important first steps and may unlock other opportunities.	Hear that their efforts to think differently are valued , and they will want to keep trying. They'll also see your confidence in and commitment to their success.
Build on the positive contribution , involving the team so members recognize how the idea might not be ready to implement or move forward. Then, discuss next steps together in precise, measurable terms.	Recognize that the idea isn't ready. They'll feel your encouragement for the next step, too, regardless of where it leads.

Selecting Promising Ideas to Move Forward

While it may be hard to believe, once you start building a culture where new ideas flourish, the challenge will be not generating new ideas, but helping your team members determine which few ideas they should take further. You'll need to get your team to agree (or start working toward agreement) on the strongest ideas by evaluating and comparing them. We have included two tools to help you do this: Spot Votes (Tool 3) and Impact/Effort Grid (Tool 4).

TOOL
3

Spot Votes

This tool will help you quickly confirm or uncover the most promising ideas and highlight the need for further action. Before following the instructions, you may want to craft a short list of criteria for evaluation ideas (e.g., costs, speed to implement).

When to Use

- To uncover or confirm the most promising ideas.
- To quickly show consensus and move to next steps.
- To illustrate the need for further action (spark inquiry more thoroughly or develop specific ideas further).

Preparation

Develop a list of ideas and key criteria for evaluating them.

Instructions

1. Have each team member put his or her ideas up on a flipchart or a white board.
2. Invite each team member to give a short reason for supporting the idea.
3. Allow each team member to vote on the two best ideas.
Colored stickers or sticky notes work well.
4. Continue discussing the ideas with the most votes.
5. If there are multiple ideas with several votes, you may want your team to revote to narrow the field.
6. For more complex discussions, use different color stickers or numbers to rank ideas (e.g., most promising, second-most promising, etc.)

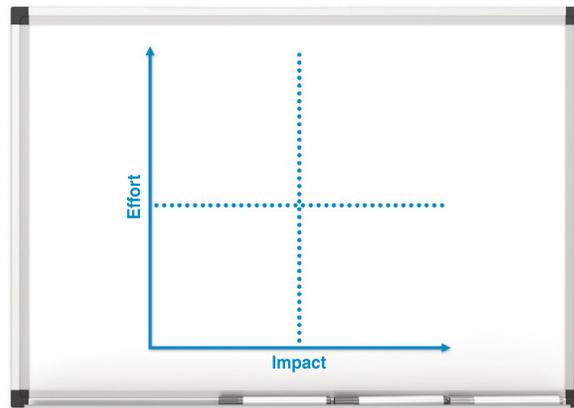
TOOL 4

Impact/Effort Grid

This tool can help you and your team decide which ideas to focus on when you have many to choose from. It's a handy way to get a two-dimensional view of each idea, so you can better set priorities based on business needs.

When to Use

To specify and differentiate between the anticipated effort and impact of many new ideas.



Instructions

1. Draw a chart with four quadrants, as shown here.
2. Rank all ideas for impact; then, rank each idea based on the effort needed to do it.
3. Discuss with the team both the *impact* of and *effort* required for each idea. Work toward building a clear consensus on the most promising ideas. (Break out the stickers again if that helps you think.)

To determine *impact*, ask the team:

- How likely is it that this idea will meet the business need when implemented?
- Will one idea, if tested first, *enable* other ideas or opportunities for innovation?
- What happens if this idea is not tested and executed?
- What will we learn from the failure or success of *testing* this idea?

To determine *effort*, ask the team:

- Do we have the resources to test and execute the idea?
- Do we have the time to test this idea?
- Are any unusual considerations present, such as the need for a unique skill or specialized equipment?

Test to Learn

Eight hundred million dollars is a lot of money! That's what Webvan spent to roll out a new idea: food ordered online and delivered to your door. It took only three years from first customer order to failure. Search for Webvan on the Internet, and you'll find dozens of reasons why its business model didn't work. However, one reason dwarfed all others: Webvan failed to carefully test the concept before trying to roll it out in dozens of cities. Our research⁸ on innovation, which we referred to earlier in this chapter, asked leaders if they encouraged employees to test out new ideas. More than two-thirds said they did. Ask employees the same question about their leaders, and only 41 percent are likely say their leaders did. Unfortunately for Webvan, their situation realized those percentages. Of course, Webvan is an extreme example, but it's fair to say that you can't afford to lose big. Finding ways to test your concept quickly, inexpensively, and repeatedly will help to ensure that your team invests in winners.

There are many ways to test out new ideas. Convening small customer focus groups to share your ideas is simple and can be very effective. Presenting new ideas to those who might be most critical is another good way to test, as is breaking the idea into parts or components and testing each one separately so that you can move quickly to learn, refine, and improve. Building a low-cost prototype of a new solution and then getting user reactions is another very good way of trying things out before going into production. Prototyping can range from drawings to building a version of the intended solution with limited functionality.

With today's Internet capabilities, innovators and entrepreneurs have the ability to reach out to user communities and experts to get input early on. One interesting example of this is a site called Kickstarter (www.kickstarter.com), which enables you to describe a new idea, test interest, and even generate funding.

There is a very favorable consequence to testing: *failure*. There is an often-used quote for innovators, although the exact origin is unknown: *Fail early and fail often*. Thomas Edison, arguably one of the world's greatest innovators, once said, *I have not failed; I've just found 10,000 ways that don't work*.

I have not failed; I've just
found 10,000 ways that
don't work.

—Thomas Edison

Any new idea has a certain degree of risk. As a first-time leader, helping your team learn from their successes is, of course, key. But, encouraging learning from failure is just as important.

Take Action

Your test outcomes—both successes and failures—provide critical input into decisions about next steps. Taking action on a new innovation is often where things fall apart. Day-to-day priorities often interfere with the work it takes to turn an idea into a useful new product, service, or process improvement. And, many of the ideas your team generates may require the involvement of other stakeholders. After testing, you should have ample information from your tests in the three areas below.

What You Learned	What You Didn't Expect	What You Still Need to Learn
For example, your test: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved success in all aspects. • Achieved success in some areas. • Uncovered flaws. 	For example, your test revealed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A surprising outcome. • Other aspects or small parts of the innovation were affected. • A new idea. • Assumptions were incorrect. 	For example, your test revealed that you need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More data. • Revisions. • Additional input.

Once you and your team have taken a closer look at the preceding information, you can determine your next steps. You might decide to:

- Execute the idea.
- Run more small tests to gather data on a possible pattern.
- Revise and retest an aspect that didn't go well.
- Use the other innovation practices to further refine this idea or to identify a different option.
- Recognize that this idea lacks promise and apply what you learned from your tests to a new idea.

If, at the end of your process, you've got a promising idea, then it's time to begin to communicate and sell it more widely within your organization. To do that, you'll need to prepare your team to champion the idea by providing the right information to all the people who matter. This group, also called *stakeholders*, will be different for each idea and might be found at any level of your organization. These are the people who will benefit from the idea or who will need to

sign off on it. Many good ideas wither and die because end-users and other internal stakeholders aren't kept involved. Stakeholders need to know what will change, why they should devote resources to your idea, and why it should be implemented at all.

The Golden Nugget

The Golden Nugget technique helps you and your team generate support and buy-in by effectively communicating the business impact of the innovation. Use Tool 5 to view a sample Golden Nugget, and use the space at the end of the tool to originate a simple, straightforward message of your own.

In the End

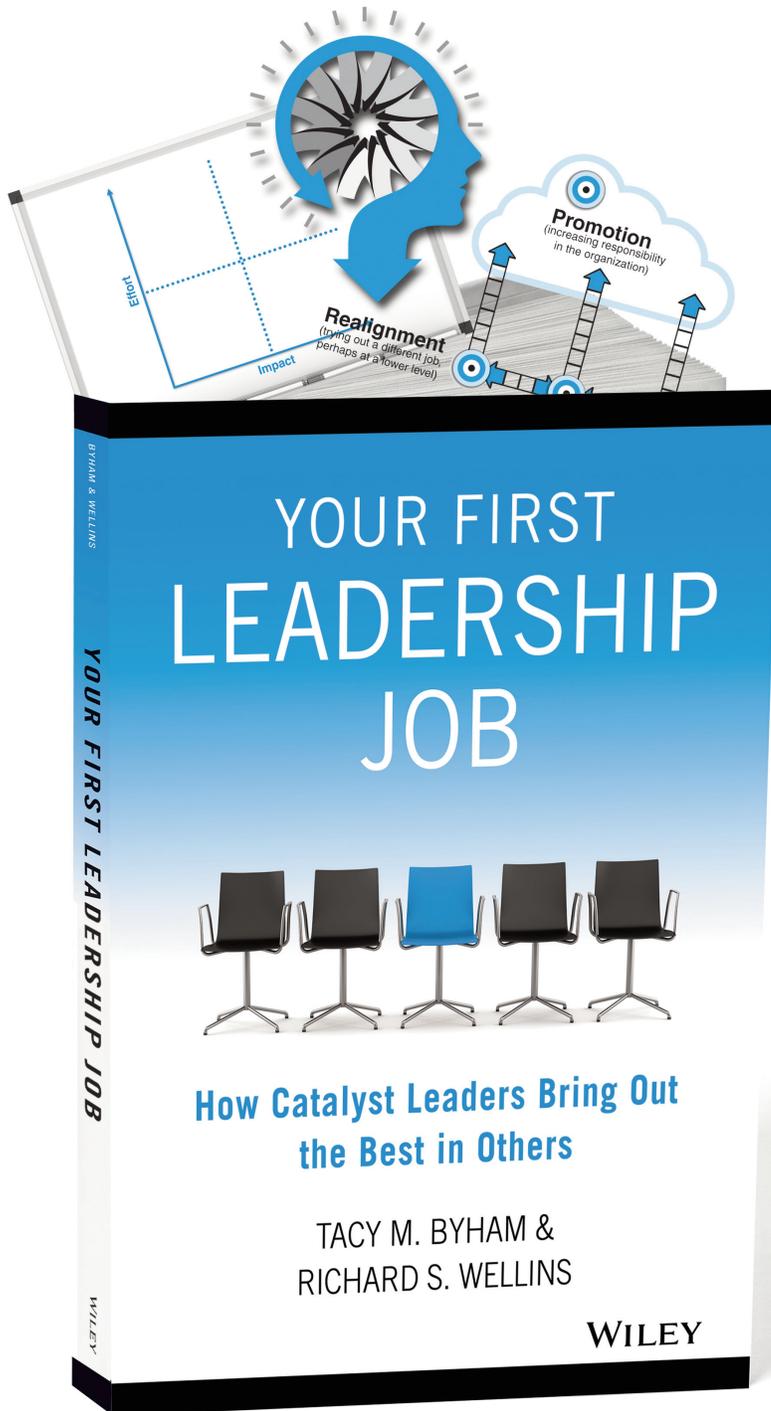
We end this chapter as we started off—it's good to have innovative ideas of your own. But, at the end of the day, your value will come from the culture and environment you establish as a leader: one that allows freedom to experiment and challenge existing assumptions, rewards success, and lets you and your team learn from failure.

Citations: Innovation

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- ³ Peter Sims, *Little Bets: How Breakthrough Ideas Emerge from Small Discoveries* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2012).
- ⁴ Mark Zuckerberg, *How do you generate innovation?*, FastCompany video, 0:38, March 2, 2012, <http://www.fastcompany.com/3011634/30-second-mba/mark-zuckerberg-how-do-you-generate-innovation>.
- ⁵ Evan Sinar et al., "Creating the Conditions for Sustainable Innovation: The Leadership Imperative," Trend Research (Pittsburgh: Development Dimensions International, 2011), 12.
- ⁶ "Innovation Solutions from InnovationManagement.se", <http://www.innovationmanagement.se/>.
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Bonus Chapter

Your Next Career Move and Next Adventure



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If you've read this far, we know a great deal about you.

We know that you're starting to understand how rewarding your leadership journey can be. And that you're committed to doing the work necessary to become a truly effective leader.

We also know that you're committed to doing a good job where you are right now. And that focus on your day-to-day responsibilities is important to you! But if we've done our jobs with this book, you'll also have discovered some important things about yourself—about your strengths and weaknesses, your passions and ambitions, and the shape you'd like your career to take.

This chapter is all about taking what you've discovered about yourself and using it to help you design your future.

For many people, careers used to be simpler. There was a straight line to follow to your next job. Back in the days of multiple leadership levels, a leader's adventure meant going up-up-up—especially if he fit the part. People would ascend the career ladder one title a time—supervisor, assistant manager, manager, assistant director, director, associate VP . . . until either world domination was achieved or a gold watch was awarded.

That was then. Today's organizations are flatter and leaner. There's a more diverse talent pool with a wider array of skills and each person looking to make his or her mark.

Reflection Point



Check in with yourself! Let's start with some basic questions. Take a moment to consider them before you respond. In fact, think of this as a private performance review, with only you in attendance. Jot down (and date) your thoughts. You'll want to revisit these questions once every few months.

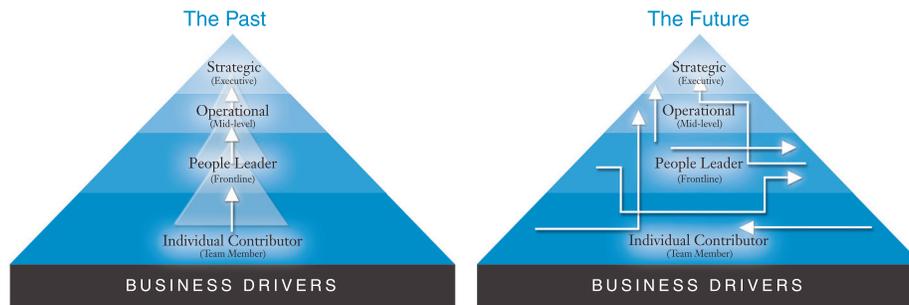
- Do you want to develop new skills, or are you happy where you are?
- How challenged are you feeling in your current role?
- Have you accomplished what you set out to do in your present role?
- Is there a dream job for you in your organization?
- If so, is there a right time to go for it?
- Should you actively seek out a lateral position—one with the same level of authority—to expand your value, network, or experience?
- What have you noticed about the people in your organization who get promoted?

Personal/professional growth and development don't always look like a job transfer or a new position. And, growth and learning opportunities can come in many different forms. We like to think of them as adventures. So, movement is not vertical (up a career ladder), but instead more like a career lattice, where adventures can (and should!) take you in any direction.

This is why we're asking you to think about career design now. With so many options available, even thinking about it can be overwhelming. But there are some easy things you can do to stay focused on your best future.

Sometimes, your adventure might take you to another function, role, or even location. Other times, the adventure might be shorter-term and have you taking on a new responsibility or working on a new project team while remaining in your current role. Either way, the adventures make you more versatile, increasing the breadth and depth of your knowledge and experience while helping you find or apply your passion. (See Figure 1.)

FIG 1 The New Career Path



We believe there are three keys to career development:

1. **Reflect:** Look inside yourself. Reflect on who you are and your personal vision.
2. **Envision the possibilities:** Synthesize insights and draw conclusions.
3. **Engage in lots of good conversations:** Explore the options on your career lattice.

On the following pages, Tool 1 provides you with an opportunity to reflect on how you see yourself, how others see you, and what it all means. Use the space below each block of questions to capture your and your peers' thoughts. Let's start with self-reflection. Don't skip this step! You'll need to fine-tune your awareness of your past and present to help chart your course for the future.

The biggest advice I would give to someone pursuing a leadership career for the first time is to know what you want and believe in yourself.

It is bloody hard here at work, but if I constantly feed myself negative thoughts, then I'm already negatively pulled and I'm not going to get what I want. The more you start seeing where you want to go and you believe in yourself, the more the doors will open.

—Finance leader, UK building products distributor

TOOL
1

Reflect: Look Inside Yourself

Part 1: How You See Yourself

Passions/Interests (What keeps you engaged?)

- What do you enjoy learning about most?
- What do you wish you had more time for?
- How would you spend your time if you didn't have to work?

Skills and Strengths (What are you good at?)

- What have you always been naturally good at?
- What can't you keep yourself from doing?
- What are you known for?

Values (What's most important to you?)

- Looking back, what's always been most important to you in life and in work?
- What issues or problems do you feel most strongly about?
- What are the top three values or things you hold most dear?

Dislikes (What do you want to avoid?)

- What kind of work have you typically gravitated away from?
- What tasks routinely get pushed to the bottom of your to-do list?
- What bores you, causes you to disengage, and leaves you with a sense of just going through the motions?

TOOL
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Preferences (How do you like to work?)

- What aspects of past jobs have you loved most or have brought you joy, energy, and a sense of persistence?
- How do you like to work?
- What kinds of work settings/spaces help you do your best work?

Weaknesses/Opportunities (What do you struggle with?)

- What lessons do you find yourself learning over and over again?
- How do your strengths sometimes work against you?
- What weaknesses do you want to work toward making stronger? Which ones are you comfortable with staying as weaknesses?
- What skills do you appreciate in others that you don't always see in yourself?

Lifestyle Considerations (How will personal lifestyle needs impact your career direction?)

- Are you willing to move for your career, or are you limited to a region?
- Do you want to work from home or have that option on occasion? How often?
- Do you prefer job stability (consistency) or frequent job changes (job hopping)?
- Are you willing to further your education to progress in your field? If so, how much time and money are you willing to invest?
- Are you dedicated to one industry?
- What are your ideal working hours to achieve your personal work-life balance goals?
- Is travel an option? If so, how much?

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Part 2: How Others See You

Gathering feedback from peers is an excellent way to help boost your self-awareness. It can be an enlightening and rewarding process. Select peers whose perspectives you value and ask them to respond honestly.

Abilities

- What are my greatest strengths?
- Which of my skills are most valuable?
- What can you always count on me for?
- What value do I bring?

Blind Spots

- What behaviors have you observed that might get in my way?
- How have I fallen short of expectations?
- How might my strengths work against me?
- What one change could I make that would have the greatest effect on my success?

Conditions

- In what settings or under what circumstances do I make the greatest contributions?
- Under what conditions have you observed me struggling?
- Do I tend to perform best when working with others or flying solo?
- What factors have you noticed triggering stress or other negative reactions for me?

Part 3: Now What Do You See?

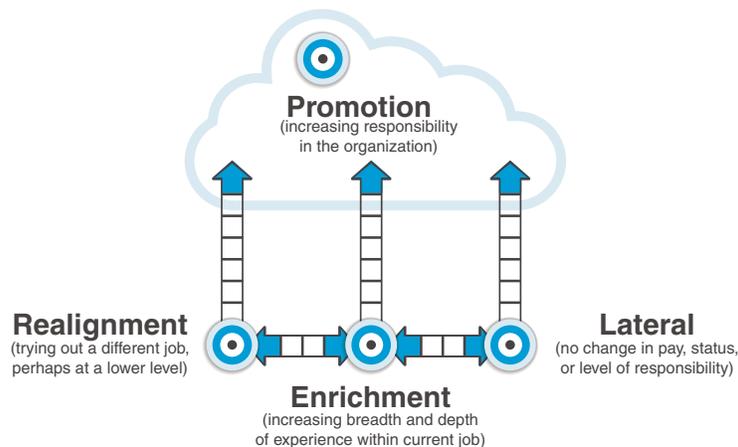
Review all of your responses carefully and draw conclusions. Use the following questions to help guide you:

- What are the commonalities, themes, or connection points?
- What thoughts or ideas are repeated? How have your interests, values, or skills evolved over time?
- What picture/image does it yield?

Envision the Possibilities: What Are My Career Options?

So now that we've sparked your thinking, the obvious question is: What's next? Yes, a promotion might be one option for your next career move. Who doesn't want a raise and a bump in prestige? But remember, careers can take many directions. You might have opportunities to move *upward* to roles of increasing responsibility or *across*, taking on different responsibilities at similar levels or in another department or team. Yet another path you can take is to *enrich* your skills in your current role. Moving laterally, realigning, or enriching within a current role are excellent career stepping stones. (See Figure 2.)

2 Types of Career Development



Here are some examples of career development moves other than promotion:

- **Realignment:** A rotational assignment from R&D into marketing would give you exposure and experience in a different corporate function.
- **Enrichment:** If your current role is supervising a team of insurance claims adjustors for automobile claims, you can enrich your role by expanding knowledge and expertise in complex automobile disputes or homeowner claims. Often, this will require additional certification, but it's an investment in your future.
- **Lateral:** This is a job change, and particularly important if you aren't motivated in your current role. This could include a change of department, function, or team.
- **Promotion:** Typical examples would be associate to team leader or sales professional to sales leader.

TOOL 2

Career Options

Tool 2 below will help you identify your own career preferences as well as determine *what direction to take* as you move along in your career development. This survey is completed in three steps. Instructions for each step begin below and continue on the following pages.

Step 1—Assessing Options

Select the number (0–5) that best measures how you feel about each statement to the left.

	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Not Applicable	Definitely Not True	Probably Not True	Not Sure	Probably True	Definitely True
1. I am ready now to take on more responsibility.	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am satisfied with the role I have in my organization.	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. I would like to see what other career opportunities are available within my company.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. I have a strong desire to advance at my organization.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. I would like a job at the same level in a different area of my company.	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am not sure what role I want to have within my organization.	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. I have the drive and ambition to go far at work.	0	1	2	3	4	5
8. There are more appealing jobs at my level in other areas of my company.	0	1	2	3	4	5
9. I like to learn about other jobs inside and outside my present organization.	0	1	2	3	4	5
10. I would like a job with greater status.	0	1	2	3	4	5
11. I want to move into an area of the company that is experiencing more growth.	0	1	2	3	4	5
12. There are many different career directions in the organization that I would like to explore.	0	1	2	3	4	5
13. I am not living up to my potential in my current position.	0	1	2	3	4	5

TOOL
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14. Other departments can offer me different challenges at the same level.	0	1	2	3	4	5
15. I think my job could be more rewarding.	0	1	2	3	4	5
16. My current job does not take advantage of all my capabilities.	0	1	2	3	4	5
17. I am seeking new challenges without additional responsibilities.	0	1	2	3	4	5
18. I talk to my leader about career development opportunities.	0	1	2	3	4	5
19. My current position is not very challenging for me.	0	1	2	3	4	5
20. The functions other departments perform interest me.	0	1	2	3	4	5
21. I would like a change in my job or position.	0	1	2	3	4	5

Step 2—Scoring the Assessment

To determine what career options you might want to pursue based on your preferences, *record* the rating you selected for each statement in the corresponding spaces below. *Add* your ratings to arrive at the *total* for each option. The *highest total* means that option is best suited to you.

REALIGNMENT OR ENRICHMENT	LATERAL	PROMOTION
3 _____	2 _____	1 _____
6 _____	5 _____	4 _____
9 _____	8 _____	7 _____
12 _____	11 _____	10 _____
15 _____	14 _____	13 _____
18 _____	17 _____	16 _____
21 _____	20 _____	19 _____
Total _____	Total _____	Total _____

TOOL
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Step 3—Understanding the Three Career Development Options

Option 1—Realignment or Enrichment

Questions you might be asking yourself include: What else can I do? How can I grow in my current role? What can I do to make my job more rewarding and personally satisfying? How can I expand my responsibilities to meet future capability expectations?

The options here are to make a transition to and expand via another role (realignment) or take on additional responsibilities in your current role (enrichment).

Given the rate at which the workplace is evolving, you've probably been asking yourself these questions anyway. If so, you're probably in a realignment or enrichment mode. As you continue to develop within your current role, you're:

- ❑ Taking *control* of your professional life and will be less likely to feel trapped in your job.
- ❑ Establishing a *state of readiness*—being prepared to move laterally or upward if and when appropriate and desirable.
- ❑ Taking the steps to *enhance* your capability and build skills to benefit you and/or your department/team.
- ❑ Getting greater *exposure* to key people in the organization, thereby increasing your contacts and chances for recognition.
- ❑ Looking toward the future and ensuring your *value* within your organization.

TOOL
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Option 2—Lateral

You're searching for a *change in job position or role* within your organization but not necessarily a change in status or a promotion. Moving laterally within your organization can keep you motivated and challenged while broadening your knowledge and skill base across one or several functions. This *breadth of experience* is vital for future growth and success.

Moving across is the *best option* to consider if:

- You're not motivated in your current job.
- You seek new experiences and challenges without additional responsibility or pressure.
- You want to prepare yourself for future opportunities.

Consider a *lateral move* if you want to:

- Learn new *skills*.
- Seek the stimulation of *new colleagues*.
- Change* your location.
- Move into a *faster* growth area.

Option 3—Promotion

Traditionally, a *promotion*—a *vertical* or *upward* move—results in more money, greater status, or more responsibility. Going vertical:

- Usually means focusing on *one or two levels* above your current position. Anything higher probably is too distant; developing plans for such a leap would be almost impossible.
- Is usually a *reward for excellence* in your current position and the result of having *demonstrated performance* equal to that required in the higher-level position.
- Most often happens when your talents coincide with the organization's needs.

If you have a strong drive to achieve upward mobility, having set your sights on a higher position, this option is the route to take to get you there.

Careers Are Developed One Conversation at a Time

Before jumping into a new job and a new organization, I would tell anyone to do some research about the organization and what its culture is like. When I received the call to interview at the Food Bank, I took the step of connecting over lunch with a woman I knew who already worked there. We had been in a book club years ago. We talked so I could just get her take on the culture. This was going to be a very different environment for me. If you're going to spend 40 or 50 hours a week in this environment, it's important to know what the culture is like, what the people who work there are like, and what they are motivated by. I'm really glad I did that, and I would suggest that even if you don't have a direct connection into the organization, use tools like LinkedIn and connect via a friend of a friend.

—Food Bank leader

When you're on a trip, your new best friends are the seasoned travelers who have been there before you. They can recommend the best sites—such as the authentic, out-of-the-way restaurants—help you decipher local customs, and just enjoy yourself without the fear of getting hopelessly lost. Your personal leadership journey should be filled with seasoned travelers who can be your guides. Your job now is to find the leadership equivalent of seasoned travelers for your career.

Career moves are like adventures.
They make you more versatile.
They increase the breadth and depth
of your knowledge and experience
while helping you apply your passion.

We've said early and often that leadership is built one conversation at a time. This time, the conversation is about you. The many conversations that you'll have over time with other leaders can help you shape your career now and for years

to come. We encourage you to leverage the tools in this chapter as you think about how you want to grow. You'll reap the benefits in terms of your own engagement, productivity, and a sense of peace that you are in the right role at the right place at the right time for you. If you ever start feeling burned out, these conversations can help you find a new lease on life and reconnect you with the passion that has already brought you this far.



About the Author

Tacy M. Byham, PhD

Tacy was named CEO of Development Dimensions International, Inc. (DDI) in 2014. She began her career there in the early 1980s as an intern in the video productions department and computer/technology groups. After graduate school she worked as a trainer in Europe and an assessor for tech clients in the United States. She helped develop innovations and eventually used her experiences to build DDI's fast-growing executive development business.

An expert in creative, custom solutions to address talent management challenges, Tacy's clients include Keurig Green Mountain, ADP, BNY Mellon, and Texas Children's Hospital. Her writing has been featured in *The Conference Board Review*, *CLO* magazine, *People Matters* (India), and *The ASTD Leadership Handbooks* (2010 and 2014). She is also a frequent presenter for the Conference Board and ATD (formerly ASTD), where she speaks on topics ranging from innovation, to women and leadership, to mid-level leadership.

Tacy grew up in the home of a thought leader and entrepreneur. Her father, Bill Byham, founded DDI in 1970, and Tacy's own perspective on leadership was developed over a lifetime of dinner conversations with her family about what makes people better stewards of the things that matter to them. She was immersed in the science of human possibility from day one as well as the importance of community service (her mother is a retired politician and community volunteer). *We traveled the world as DDI grew, Tacy says of her early access to leaders and management thinkers. I had a bird's eye view of how things actually worked and could work better. I was inspired. And, after working for a few bad bosses in the tech industry, I wanted to join DDI to work with our fascinating clients and help solve their people challenges.*

On reflection, it's not what you get, but what you give. Well, recently, one of Tacy's teammates left DDI to pursue his life's passion. In a parting note he wrote, *I could write pages on how thankful I am to have worked for you. I really appreciate your genuine care and concern for me ... for all of us!*

Tacy holds an MA in Mathematics/Computer Science from Mt. Holyoke College and a PhD in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from the University of Akron.

@TacyByham



About the Author

Richard S. Wellins, PhD

Rich currently serves as head of worldwide research and marketing for DDI. He has loved every minute of being a leader (well, almost every minute). Since joining DDI more than 30 years ago, he's held various leadership roles, including positions in sales, R&D, and marketing. Rich earned his PhD in Social/Industrial Psychology from American University. Prior to DDI, he served as a professor of psychology at Western Connecticut State University and as a research psychologist for the US Department of Defense.

This is Rich's fifth book on leadership, including a best seller, *Empowered Teams*. He has worked with dozens of clients on leadership assessment and development projects, including Toyota, AXA, Nissan, Colgate, A.T. Cross, and Sunrise Living. He has presented dozens of conference keynotes on his research around the world, including the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), The Conference Board, Association for Talent Development, HRoot (China), and People Matters (India). He currently serves as a judge for CNBC's Asia Business Leaders of the Year Award (ABLA), interviewing the top-performing CEOs throughout Asia. Rich also spearheads DDI's biennial *Global Leadership Forecast*, which features data on best leadership practices collected from over 75,000 leaders. His work has been featured in *Forbes*, the *New York Times*, National Public Radio, CNBC, *Fortune*, and the *Wall Street Journal*.

Rich's interest in leadership came from two life-changing experiences. The first: *My father owned two drug stores, and my mother worked with him running the cosmetics counter*, he recalled. As a teen, Rich was assigned every dirty job there was, from running deliveries to cleaning restrooms. *My dad wanted to make sure that nobody thought I got better treatment than anyone else*. One of the stores served a neighborhood in New Britain, Connecticut, with a high poverty rate. His dad sent him on almost all the deliveries in the community to individuals who relied on the supplies he delivered. *His objective was to teach me, and I'm grateful*, Rich said. *All of these were valuable lessons in leadership, sharing, and accountability*.

His second leadership learning experience was with the Department of Defense as a research psychologist. He spent time on field exercises with the 101st Airborne, working with first lieutenants. As Rich likes to say, *If you can do well as a military first-line leader, the rest of your leadership positions will be a lot easier*.

@RichWellins