

21st Century Leadership Challenge

The Problem:

In the 21st century, the definition of effective leadership has changed considerably. The pace of change is unrelenting. The complexity of the environment is unprecedented. The engagement of our workforce is our only sustainable competitive advantage. We are firmly planted in the information age where knowledge workers are demanding a leader who can engage their heads, hearts and hands.

Dawn Frail, President and founder of the Eagle Vision Leadership Development Group, proclaims these are the times of the *Leadership Perfect Storm*. For the first time in history, leaders must simultaneously navigate three very powerful forces.

The Leadership Perfect Storm

Gender: Women make up half of the workforce and bring unique needs and perspectives about leading and being led.

Generation: Retirement has been postponed for many people, resulting in workers from vastly different eras working on the same team.

Globalization: The world is literally at your doorstep, and the cultural diversity of the workforce poses new challenges for today's leaders.

Now add to this the impending leadership talent crisis. Estimates say half of the top leaders will have retired by 2015, with millions more to follow by 2020. Leadership talent is a critical strategic asset and organizations must make a significant effort to develop, strengthen and protect it. Where will the talent come from to refill the leadership pipeline?

The Solution:

Consider that many organizations are overlooking a valuable talent pool: *women*. This large and powerful group is ready, willing and able to step in to help solve the current challenges.

The Women's Movement

Women have been driving societal change for decades, and Dawn Frail describes the women's movement as being in its fourth generation. The first three generations represent major milestones already achieved, and the fourth generation is the one we are currently in.

- 1st Generation:** Right to vote
- 2nd Generation:** Right to decide
- 3rd Generation:** Right to equality
- 4th Generation:** Respected leaders

This 4th generation of the women's movement will see women recognized and rewarded as respected leaders. To succeed, women need to draw on their natural talents and lead like women. Both genders must recognize that what makes strong women also makes strong leaders. Their naturally collaborative and nurturing style is perfectly suited to bring out the best in knowledge workers by building trust, fostering teamwork and fueling innovation. Women are uniquely qualified and perfectly positioned to meet the leadership needs of this knowledge-worker age. They can alleviate the leadership talent shortage and redefine leadership for future generations.

Dawn Frail is a speaker and consultant and focuses exclusively on helping women become more effective leaders. She resides in Caledon, Ontario and can be reached at dawn@dawnfrail.com

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Who is Dawn?

A native of Ontario, Canada, Dawn's background is in Finance and IT. Her first career spanned almost a decade and led her through various accounting roles in Ontario and Alberta. Dawn lived in Germany for a year and then returned to Canada to pursue a formal education in Computer Information Systems. Dawn worked as an Application Programmer and Technical Systems Analyst at a major chartered bank for almost 10 years.

Thinking she was on the right path, she kept her nose to the grindstone, stayed focused, and successfully survived a major acquisition. Dawn looked up one day to find her IT job had disappeared and she had not kept her skills current. Not wanting to start back at the bottom of the ladder, and not wanting to leave the current company, her Director asked her, "What other skills do you have?" Dawn's response: "Let me tell you what else I do."

Several years earlier Dawn had started a communication skills company. By running public training programs and doing private speech coaching, Dawn helped people to overcome their fears and learn to communicate with confidence in business settings. She learned this skill thanks to a Toastmasters Club that had helped her overcome her own intense fear of speaking in public and her rough-around-the-edges 'techie' communication style. It was those skills and her 15 years of leadership experience in the non-profit environment that helped launch her career in the human resources industry.

Dawn spent the next six years as a Management Trainer and Organization Development Consultant. Responsible for developing and delivering a leadership development program for a national company, she found her passion.

Birth of a Leadership Theory

During Dawn's tenure as an Organization Development Consultant, she found herself becoming more and more frustrated with the corporate environment. She felt she was unable to do many of the things she wanted to do to help the leaders actually change their behaviours. Managers were coming to training programs claiming they'd tried what they learned in the last program and it didn't work. Dawn determined that the root cause to this problem was the lack of trust between the leader and the follower, and this had become a growing trend. This launched Dawn into the study of trust in the workplace.

This was also the time of Enron, Tyco and WorldCom. Believing there to be a direct connection between trust and ethics, Dawn expanded her field of study to include ethics as it relates to leadership. As a result of her research, Dawn created her own leadership model called The 10 Commandments of Ethical Leadership. It is founded on the philosophy that when the leader builds trust and loyalty, the team will increase productivity and thereby increase bottom line profits. There is much data to show that not only do nice guys not finish last, they very often finish first.

In 2005, Dawn left the corporate world and began working as a leadership development consultant. It was here that Dawn would notice the next trend: **Women**. As a career mother with four children, Dawn knows all too well the challenges women face in the workplace. Believing that women have innate leadership talent, Dawn has chosen to focus her leadership development career on helping women become more effective leaders. By working directly with women, Dawn has been able to create a learning experience that helps leaders change their behaviour. Through execution coaching she helps leaders close the strategy-execution gap and drive business results. Dawn can also be found on the conference stage delivering her message of hope to women everywhere.