



International Leadership Institute: Providing Leadership Development Services and Programs in the US and Europe since 1985

# Leaders to Follow

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This newsletter is an excerpt from our new book, *21st Century Jobs*, which we will publish through ILI Publishing House in February 2009.

## New Century, New Job Opportunities

by Jarda and Sara Tusek

What is new or different about job opportunities in this century? Increasingly, people are looking for job opportunities that will allow them to claim a stake in the product they're creating or the service they're providing. The "new economy" teaches us all to develop a new mindset, one that is willing to accept higher risk in our career path (with the hope of higher rewards in terms of personal participation and fulfillment).

### CHANGING TECHNOLOGY

Technology (especially the Internet and cell phones) plays a large part in this new mindset, as these means of instant communication allow everyone to connect with the greater culture and to have a voice. This "democratization of influence" means that not only the rich and powerful have their say; anyone with an opinion can speak up on the world-wide web and have the ability to effect change in the decision-making process laterally, downward and upward.

In the world of work, this new ability to influence those in power means that the employee no longer feels at the mercy of some remote, distant "management" that controls all aspects of his or her job. Workers can share ideas, attitudes and insights through a variety of means, the Internet being only the most obvious. Chat rooms, instant messaging and text messaging on cell phones make it easy to keep in constant touch with your peers at work, exchanging information that affects

your job and your entire workplace.

### NO MORE "TOP-DOWN" FLOW

No longer does information flow down from above in a controlled, orderly manner. This is true for the entire culture—for example, soldiers can share "instant images" of battle as they are fighting through cell phones, blogs, on-line videos and email. Students can text message their friends and parents as their teachers speak, creating a virtual audience that interprets actions as they are happening. All of us can comment on situations as they are happening, making the heretofore passive "observer" into an equally powerful "co-creator" of reality.

With the power to interpret and define reality so widely spread throughout the society, it's not surprising that the new worker wants and expects power in his or her job. The old "need to know" hierarchical structures are completely outdated: workers simply ignore them and go around them, communicating information to each other as quickly as it is gained. *to p. 2*

### The International Leadership Institute (ILI)

- WAS FOUNDED IN 1985 IN PRINCETON, NJ
- REMAINS DEDICATED TO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
- HAS RUN MORE THAN 70 EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN THE US AND EUROPE, FOR MORE THAN 900 LEADERS.
- HAS PARTNERED WITH THE US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, THE CZECH MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND TRADE, THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA, THE JACKSONVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND MORE THAN 700 OTHER BUSINESSES, UNIVERSITIES, RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS, PRIVATE CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES
- THROUGH THE ILI PUBLISHING HOUSE, PUBLISHES BOOKS, REPORTS AND PERIODICALS AIMED AT ASSISTING CURRENT AND FUTURE LEADERS, WHO SEEK TO UNDERSTAND AND IMPLEMENT CONTEMPORARY LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES WHICH ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY.



- The best new job opportunities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, will be those that**
- **Involve the employee in his or her job creation**
  - **Respect the ideas, values and knowledge of the employee**
  - **Trust the employee to help make new approaches to the work of the organization**



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## *New Century, New Job Opportunities* from p. 1

### **ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSES**

Obviously this new attitude toward work has implications for organizations. If the job-seeker is looking for more autonomy in his or her career, and is willing to trade the old promise of “job security” in a structured and hierarchical organization for more creativity and “job ownership” in a less structured, more free-flowing organization, then companies and institutions must respond. Organizations need to provide jobs that are less “set in concrete” and more able to take advantage of changing circumstances. Jobs need to be less fixed and more fluid. The best new job opportunities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, then, will be those that

- Involve the employee in all aspects of his or her job, beginning with defining the job and allowing enough flexibility for the job to evolve organically as circumstances change;
- Respect the ideas, values and knowledge of the employee, using not only those parts of the worker that “fit” management’s idea of the job but also the “bonus” parts of the employee that management was fortunate enough to receive when they hired the employee—the parts that management didn’t even know it was receiving!
- Trust the employee to sort out what can be done according to the organization’s policies and traditions from what calls for an entirely new approach and set of guidelines;
- Reward the employee for showing ingenuity and initiative, even when the results are less than perfect, so as to encourage the employee to be active rather than passive in the organization.

### **CONNECTIONS AND FRIENDSHIP**

Recent news articles stress the new values of the so-called “Gen Y,” the generation that is taking over from the Baby Boomers. Whereas the baby boomers struggled to have it all—career, family, spiritual expression and personal growth, losing something in

all areas in the process—Gen Y is more flexible and realistic, leaving and re-entering the workplace on their own schedules to accommodate their changing interests and needs.

Gen Y members in their 20’s and early 30’s have also been notably deliberate in making the kinds of decisions that traditionally mark the transition to adulthood: establishing their own homes, marriage, having children and becoming entrenched in a career (finding a lifetime job).

Gen Y’ers return home, or don’t leave home at all, as the situation develops. Marriage is postponed, while friendship takes on many of marriage’s roles in terms of feeling connected, building strong emotional bonds and providing security in transitions.

Gen Y members are not at all afraid to leave their jobs, even when there’s no new job at hand. Informal networks of job seekers help each other, often recommending their friends to take over when they leave a job and even trading jobs if the change seems to make sense.

Keeping connected, staying in touch, exchanging information—these are the priorities of the new worker. Workers want to stay within the friendship/sports team/university communities they have built, and are most happy when working with people who share their experience and values. Some universities are recognizing the immense impact of these networks on the lives of their students and developing community co-op education programs that put students into teams in their communities, so they can see their ability to shape the community while working with friends.

Wise workplaces will honor this preference and incorporate practices that encourage the establishment of employee-employee bonds, rather than seeing them as a potential threat to the organization’s official power structure.

### **NEW OPPORTUNITIES**

Clearly, all of these changes—technological, economic, and social—are opportunities in the making, for the person who is prepared and wise about his or her own potential contribution. It’s an exciting time to be looking for a job!