

Leadership in the year 2010 – implications for policing

By Federal Agent Tony Negus
Director Operations, Eastern Operations

In today's business environment, the traditions set in place in the 20th century are increasingly becoming out-dated and restrictive – and this also applies to traditional concepts of management and leadership.

In a paper prepared for the 2001 Police Executive Leadership Program, **Federal Agent Tony Negus**, the AFP's Director Operations for Eastern Operations, considers the implications this period of rapid change and uncertainty has for policing in the year 2010.

As organisations adapt to the challenges presented by this ever-changing environment, it may be time for those traditional hierarchical management models which have dominated policing in the 20th century to give way to more responsive, flexible styles of leadership.



Federal Agent Tony Negus
Director Operations, Eastern Operations

According to White, Hodgson & Cramer (1996, p.64), the rules that apply in business today will not apply tomorrow – no matter what tomorrow brings. Faced with increased uncertainty, policing like other professions must ensure that it identifies and nurtures leaders, at all levels, with the appropriate skills to meet the new and ever changing environments of the future.

Over many years, authors have searched for the elusive ingredients that make up an effective leader (Yukl 1981, p.xi; MacDonald 1995, p.208) and during this

search, many theories and models of leadership have been identified and developed. This paper will examine the current trends and ideas in leadership and attempt to identify the most appropriate leadership style for the environment likely to face police leaders in the year 2010.

21st Century Leaders

The 20th century saw large periods of stability and predictability in which organisations were rigid and controlled by rules and hierarchy (Kiernan, 1996). As it drew to a close, however, the environment began to change dramatically and organisations were forced to rethink their leadership and management practices. Policing like many other traditional, rules based, hierarchical organisations has been



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somewhat slow to adapt to these changes and many policing organisations still find themselves rooted deeply in the past (MacDonald 1995, p.210).

It is expected that the 21st century will be a period of discontinuous change, requiring speed and responsiveness, leadership from everybody, permanent flexibility, control by vision and values, and with creativity and intuition being the cornerstones of success (Kiernan 1996).

The profile and skill set of a leader in Australia will also change dramatically during this century. The leaders during the

major part of the 20th century tended to be predominantly male, Anglo Celtic, autocratic and with a local focus. They tended to spend their entire career in the same organisation, in a stable environment and tended to have a paternal view of the workforce.

Leaders of the 21st century will be male or female and from a wide range of ethnicities. They will hold postgraduate qualifications and be the product of major development programs, including placements in other organisations. They will have a global focus and travel regularly, probably having lived in two or more countries. They will also find themselves in a time of rapid change and be on limited term appointments (Bensoussan 2001).

Research has also shown that the ability to influence, motivate and empower one's staff, are the fastest growing priorities for Chief Executives (Syrret & Hogg 1992, p.329). Further research conducted by the Australian Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills (BCG 1994, p.4) identified five key challenges for business executives in the next 10 to 20 years:

1. Mastering a complex fast changing and possibly unfamiliar competitive environment.
2. Managing relationships with Asian customers, suppliers, partners, owners, colleagues and workforces.
3. Mastering the capability based drivers of competitive success.
4. Leading an organisation of quite different design.
5. Working well with new sorts of colleagues.

The Task Force concluded that a new generation of senior managers with a very different profile of skills, knowledge and experience must be developed (BCG 1994, p.60). They suggested that the leaders of the future would need to know how to operate in an environment other than the traditional vertical command structure. This new environment was likely to be one in which leadership, coaching and supporting teams, and articulating the values of the organisation would be of greater importance. The leadership skills considered necessary in the Task Force Report are contained in Table 1 (see page 5).

Table 1: Leadership skills and qualities required for the next 10 – 20 years
(BCG 1994, p.52)

1. Ability to be comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity.
2. Language skills.
3. Situational skills (cultural awareness, conversational skills, manners).
4. Ability to invest values in the organisation.
5. Articulation and communication skills.
6. Teamwork.
7. Sophisticated use of information and IT.
8. Ability to analyse the most difficult problems and provide organisational vision.
9. Superior understanding of people.

The Australian Government has also published a Senior Executive Leadership Capability Framework (PSMPC, n.d.). The framework identifies five core criteria for high performance by senior executives in the Australian Public Service and is based on the requirements now and into the future. The five core criteria are listed below:

- Achieves results.
- Shapes strategic thinking.
- Cultivates productive working relationships.
- Communicates with influence.
- Exemplifies personal drive and integrity.

Leadership Styles for the Future

It has been suggested that as the organisation of the future becomes increasingly networked, independent and culturally diverse, it will require a transformational leadership style to bring together their creativity, imagination and best efforts (Cascio 1995, p.930). A transformational environment, however, can only be achieved by selecting the right leaders and providing them with the necessary knowledge, time and support.

Transformational leadership has emerged as the leadership style most capable of succeeding and therefore surviving well into this century. It is argued that the transformational leadership era presents the most promising phase in the evolutionary development of leadership theory (Van Seters & Field 1990, p.37).

But what makes transformational leadership different from so many other theories, ideas or leadership fads of the past? This paper will endeavour to answer this question and elaborate on why this form of leadership is so important in today's rapidly changing world.

This paper will also identify the type of leadership that might be required for the future. It will be suggested that transformational leadership, or an advancement of its ideals, will prove to be the most appropriate form of leadership for the coming decade. As change is now the norm, transformational leadership will also be shown to be the type of leadership best suited to help organisations maintain their environmental fit.

James McGregor Burns (1978) contrasted what he perceived to be the two essential forms of leadership. He called these two forms transactional and transformational leadership (Conger & Kanungo 1988, p.25). These two forms will be briefly examined in the following paragraphs.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is said to motivate followers by appealing to their self-interest. Pay, status and similar kinds of rewards are exchanged for work effort and the values emphasised are those related to the exchange process (Hunt 1991, p.187). Similarly,



McLean and Weitzel (1991, pp.54–5) define transactional leadership approaches as “those that offer either the promise of reward or the threat of discipline, depending on the follower’s performance of specific measurable tasks.”

Under transactional leadership the rewards are usually specific, tangible and calculable. The relationship lasts only as long as the needs of both the leader and the followers continue to be satisfied by the exchange (Conger & Kanungo 1988, p.25). It is therefore, not a relationship that “binds leader and follower together in a mutual and continuing search for a higher purpose” (Burns 1978, p.20).

An example of a transactional leadership

theory that has been the subject of extensive testing is the Path-Goal Theory (Evans 1970; House 1971; House & Mitchell 1974). Theories such as this call attention to the importance of situational factors that moderate the effects of a leader’s behaviour. Transactional leadership theories tend to emphasise the need for leaders to diagnose what is missing and take action to facilitate the followers’ performance (Conger & Kanungo 1988, p.100).

The following tables by Dr Bernard M. Bass (1990, cited in McLean & Weitzel 1991, p.55) offer a summary of the characteristics of transactional and transformational leadership.

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Table 2(a): Transactional Leadership summary

Transactional Leader

Contingent reward	➔	Contracts exchange of rewards for effort . . . recognises accomplishment.
Management by exception (active)	➔	Watches and searches for deviations from rules and standards . . . takes corrective action.
Management by exception (passive)	➔	Intervenes only if standards are not met.
Laissez-faire	➔	Abdicates responsibility . . . avoids making decisions.

Table 2(b): Transformational Leadership summary

Transformational Leader

Charisma	➔	Provides vision and a sense of mission . . . instills pride . . . gains respect and trust.
Inspiration	➔	Communicates high expectations . . . uses symbols to focus efforts . . . expresses important purposes in simple ways.
Simulation	➔	Promotes intelligence . . . rationality . . . and careful problem solving.
Individualism	➔	Gives personal attention . . . treats each follower separately, coaches and advises.

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The elements of transformational leadership and its development will be discussed further in the following paragraphs.

Transformational Leadership

There are many definitions of transformational leadership, however, most revolve around the concept of the leader shifting the values, beliefs and needs of their followers (Luthans 1992, p.285; Kellerman 1984, p.79; Pincus & Debonis, 1994, p.306). Bass (1985, p.20), however, provides a more specific interpretation when he states:

“Transformational leaders engage in behaviours that help raise subordinates’ levels of consciousness about the importance and the value of certain outcomes, encourage subordinates to transcend their self interests in favour of the interests of the organisation, encourage the development of subordinates and arouse subordinate’s intellectual stimulation”.

It can be seen from these definitions that transformational leadership involves both leaders and followers raising each other’s motivation and sense of higher purpose. This higher purpose is one in which the aims and aspirations of leaders and followers merge into one (Bryman 1992, p.95).

The crystallisation of the aims and aspirations of groups of people is not an easy task. The transformational leader aims to merge these aims and aspirations by seeking to engage the follower as a whole person, and not simply as an individual with a restricted range of basic needs. The transformational leader will address the higher order needs of the follower by looking at the full range of motives that move them (Bryman 1992, p.95). Clearly, under transformational leadership the formation, building and maintenance of relationships is critical. It is by the very

nature of this relationship that others are motivated to do more than they thought possible, move beyond self-interest and focus on the larger goals of the organisation.

Perhaps the greatest contribution to our understanding of transformational leadership has been the identification by Avolio, Waldman and Yammarino (1991) of four characteristics, which transformational leaders use to stimulate and engage followers.

These characteristics are commonly referred to as the four “I’s” and are contained in Table 3.

Table 3: The four ‘I’s’ of transformational leadership
(Avolio et al 1991, pp13–14).

1. **Individualised consideration**
Gives personal attention to others, making each individual feel uniquely valued.
2. **Intellectual stimulation**
Actively encourages a new look at old methods, stimulates creativity, encourages others to look at problems and issues in a new way.
3. **Inspirational motivation**
Increases optimism and enthusiasm, communicates high expectations, points out possibilities not previously considered.
4. **Idealised influence**
Provides vision and a sense of purpose. Elicits respect, trust and confidence from followers.

It is very difficult to find fault with the concept of a transformational leader. The ability and power of a person to become a leader armed with such noble principles and rising above self-interest has much to be admired. When this is coupled with that person investing these talents back into the group so that both the leader and followers ultimately transform and develop, transformational leadership could be seen as an admirable objective. McLean & Weitzel (1991, pp.54–5) suggest that transformational leadership is closer to the prototype of ideal leadership that people have in mind when they describe their ideal leader.

This brings up an interesting question. Should leaders engage in transactional

leadership at all? McLean and Weitzel (1991, p.55) offer a view born from instinct rather than research. They hold the view that there is nothing wrong with an established transformational leader using the promise of rewards for the performance of followers, however, are doubtful about threats of penalty.

Bass and Avolio (1989) suggest that it is possible for transformational leaders to move back to a transactional style of leadership on occasion. They argue, however, that it is not possible for a transactional leader to move occasionally into transformational mode. This argument appears sound as the transformational leader possesses higher order leadership skills and could reasonably be expected to successfully move back to a transactional style. The transactional leader, not in possession of the skills required to be a transformational leader, would find the move much more challenging.

Despite its obvious advantages, it is probable that presently, the use of transformational leadership remains the exception rather than the rule. Couto (1997, p.2) suggests that because transformational leadership is such a noble pursuit, it is beyond the grasp of most ordinary mortals. To say that pure transformational leadership is difficult is not to say that it is impossible. What is likely to happen in practice is that transformational leaders will quite properly use other leadership styles such as transactional methods.

Avolio et al (1991, p.9) suggest that transformational leadership should not be seen as a replacement for other styles of leadership. Rather, it should be added to other styles thereby expanding the leader's range of skills. The overarching benefits of building and maintaining transformationally oriented organisations, however, should not be underestimated.

There have also been some who question the perceived obsession with transformational leadership (Gronn 1995) and have raised questions about its ethics (Keeley 1995). The critics argue that the rhetoric of transformational leadership may, in fact, appeal to emotions rather than to reason and that it lacks the checks and balances of democratic discussion and distribution. It has also been argued that transformational leadership violates the principles of the Organisational Development Movement, and that it manipulates followers

into ignoring the follower's own best interests (Bass 1996, p.13).

Bass (1996) rebuts these claims as failing to consider the positive aspects of inspirational leadership. He suggests that the critics ignore the shortcomings of the democratic processes of the Organisational



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Development Movement and that they fail to distinguish between transformational and pseudo-transformational leadership. Hickman (1993) agrees that rather than being unethical, "true transformational leaders identify the core values and unifying purposes of the organisation and its members, liberate their human potential, and foster plural leadership and effective satisfied followers."

Links To Organisational Change

It is generally accepted that the world is moving forward at a pace previously not seen. Change must now be accepted as a continuous cycle (Overholt et al 1994, p.39 : Vecchio et al 1988, p.592) and genuine transformations are required for organisations to maintain fit within their environment (Pullen, 1993, pp.30–8). In these times of rapid change it has been argued that transformational leadership is essential by creating visions of potential opportunities and instilling employee commitment to change (Tichy & Ulrich 1984). Transformational leaders tend to embody the very principles they espouse. In time of chaos, when the rules are changing, followers look to transformational leaders for new rules. In these times policies and procedures are replaced by values and principles.

Organisational change, furthermore, can only be sustained by the organisation's people and it is here that the personal relationships between leaders and followers become critical (Dunphy & Stace 1995, p.163). Transformational leadership's attention to these relationships can only enhance the chances for organisational success.

Transformational leadership has become a necessity in the post-industrial world of work (Bass 1996, p.13). The traditional manufacturing or service job has been replaced by a manufacturing or service process, completed by a flexible team with a diverse range of skills, interests and attitudes (Cascio 1995, p.928–939). As a consequence, "today's networked, independent, culturally diverse organisations require transformational leadership to bring out . . . in followers . . . their, creativity, imagination and best efforts" (Cascio 1995, p.930).

As a service industry, the observations of Bass (1996) and Cascio (1995) are becoming increasingly apparent in Australian policing. In the Australian Federal Police, for example, self-directed, multi-disciplinary work teams are now the rule rather than the exception (Palmer 1996, pp.11–13).

Some pseudo-transformational leaders can be, quite correctly, branded as immoral and unethical. It is important, however, to distinguish these from the genuine transformational leaders who engage in the moral uplifting of their followers. These leaders are able to move and empower their followers to convert visions into realities and share in their success (Bass 1996, p.14). Bass argues that these leaders should be

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applauded, not chastised for their efforts.

The role that transformational leadership can play in society as a whole can also not be underestimated. Hickman (1993) suggests that in the framework of transformistic organisations, transformational leadership assumes elevated sights and dimensions beyond those set in the previous era. Leadership and followship are less dependent on positional authority and more on interdependent work relationships centred on common purposes. Transformational leadership therefore, has the potential to maximise human capacity, organisational capabilities and contributions to societal well-being. Through the development of their associates and themselves, transformational leaders optimise the development of their organisation as well. High performing personnel build high performing organisations (Bass 1990).

Directions For Change In The Next Decade

Perhaps the most important direction for change into the next decade is knowledge. Leaders need to learn to lead and need to allocate the time necessary to lead.

Many of the behaviours identified in this paper are practiced unknowingly by leaders within organisations. It is suggested that these practices are done so intuitively because they have evolved over many years as practices that work. Education of our leaders, however, needs to become a primary objective of organisations so that more tools can be provided to deal with a rapidly changing world. Coupled with this need to increase knowledge is the need to improve the methods used to identify future leaders.

Nowhere is this more important than in policing. It is critical that senior managers 'walk the walk' and 'talk the talk' of transformational leadership. It is important to realise that we are in the midst of transforming to a new system of leadership, and in the midst of such dramatic change there is likely to be instability, chaos and doubt (Bass 1990). Leaders throughout the organisation need to be supported in their decisions and given time to develop their teams.

One of the most important factors in this regard will be an organisational commitment to empowerment. Organisations must move away from the 'leave your brains at the door' mentality where members attend work and do only as they are told – no more and no less.

An employee's intellectual capital needs to be nurtured, developed and more directly rewarded if organisations are to remain competitive. Thus, to fundamentally change leadership practices, we must also change the follower's ways of thinking (Avolio 1997, pp.1–5).

One of the key payoffs of transformational leadership is that followers do not resist self development (Avolio et al 1991, p.15). If the transformational leadership wave can gather momentum through increasing leaders' and organisations' knowledge, it may well become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The more that followers are able to self develop in a transformational environment the more that they are likely to exhibit the values and beliefs we associate with transformational leadership and the more likely they are to become transformational leaders themselves. It would appear that vigilance here is the key. The right type of leaders need to be given the opportunity to lead and it is only through education of the organisation's management that this will occur.

Avolio (1997, pp.5–6) suggests that organisations that have been most successful in achieving dramatic transformations in their leadership systems have had several distinguishing characteristics. These characteristics are listed below.

- They have articulated, in terms of new systems and processes, what they are hoping and expecting to evolve.
- They have realised the need to replace old systems, and have spent time retiring them, whilst in the midst of creating new ones.
- They have considered the needs of individuals at all levels, who are used to operating in a different way, and have taken time to explain, justify, and ultimately reward operating in new and substantially different ways. In this regard, they have involved those being affected in the process of change, by including their ideas, needs, concerns and aspirations as part of the process of change.
- They have made it worthwhile to change, motivating individuals to operate in line with the new system's requirements.
- They have provided the necessary education to change rather than simply assuming that people know how to change.
- Finally, they have demonstrated the courage to stay on course, regardless of the resistance to change, and have been patient, allowing for mistakes to occur along the way.

Conclusion

Most leadership today falls under the category of transactional. Traditionally, leaders tend to monitor the workplace and make a diagnosis on what is needed to achieve the desired result. They will then provide specific, tangible and calculable rewards or impose discipline on followers depending on the level of performance of measurable tasks. While this has been a reasonably effective way of leading it has tended to suppress the initiative of followers and provides them little opportunity to grow. As Burns (1978, p.20) puts it, transactional leadership does not foster a relationship that "binds leader and follower together in a mutual and continuing search for a higher purpose."

Transformational leadership on the other hand revolves around the concept of the leader shifting the values, beliefs and needs of the followers and both raising each other's motivation and sense of higher purpose. The



higher purpose is achieved when the aims and aspirations of leaders and followers congeal into one (Bryman 1992, p.5).

The way in which transformational leaders influence followers has been identified by Avolio et al (1991, pp.13–14). They suggest that four characteristics, individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation and idealised influence enable the leader to stimulate and

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engage followers in a transformational way. Some of these elements have come under attack from critics of transformational leadership for their ethical position. The evidence discussed in this paper suggests, however, that these attacks have been misguided.

Transformational change has developed concurrently with rapid technological development and times of radical organisational change. The principles of transformational leadership lend themselves very well to uncertainty and the use of all available intellectual capital that an organisation possesses. The attention to leader and follower relationships which

transformational leadership promotes places organisations in the strongest possible position to deal with change and maintain fit within the environment.

Finally, transformational leadership presents the most promising phase in the evolutionary development of leadership theory (Van Seters & Field 1990, p.37). As the organisation of the future continues to evolve, it will require transformational leadership to help it reach its potential (Cascio 1995, p.930). This can only be achieved by selecting the right leaders and by providing them with the knowledge, time and support to carry out their role.

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