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Towards Best Or Better Practice In Corporate Leadership Development: Issues In Mode 2 Research

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Abstract

The research reported here was part of a government initiative to improve the management and leadership capability of corporations in the UK. As part of this initiative, a group was established to consider corporate leadership development. What could be learned from current practice in top (FTSE 250) companies that might be of value to other organisations striving to improve their own practices? The authors were the researchers responsible for conducting research appropriate to this objective.

This paper explores the research at two levels: the research project and findings and also reflections on the research process. These reflections consider the tensions inherent in conducting Mode 2 research i.e. research that is co-produced between academic researchers and practitioners to produce actionable research. Such research needs to be rigorous and make a contribution to knowledge. This research was driven by government policy and steered by a Working Group of practitioners. This provided different opportunities and constraints than might be the case in conducting Mode 1 research.

Towards best or better practice in corporate leadership development: issues in Mode 2 research

The Council for Excellence in Management and Leadership (CEML) was established to help the UK improve its stock of good quality managers and leaders. This particular project was aimed at the improvement of leadership in large corporations and was steered by a Working Group comprised of Directors or executives reporting into main boards with such responsibility. This paper gives an account of the research as a case study and outlines the findings.

A second aim for this paper is to consider this work as a case study of 'Mode 2' research. The concept of Mode 2 research originates with Gibbons et al (1994), and was brought to prominence for management researchers by, for example, Tranfield and Starkey (1998) and Starkey and Madan (2000). Its detailed meaning is much discussed, but broadly speaking it is research developed in the context of its application, solving some 'live' problem for those for whom the research is produced. Starkey and Madan (2001) argue that closing the relevance gap requires the stakeholders in management research to creatively address issues of research content, process and dissemination. This contrasts with Mode 1 research that equates to pure research, or research developed in a separate context from that in which the problem or issue stimulating the research originates (usually, in a university), without any immediate aspiration to apply the knowledge produced (though knowledge produced by Mode 1 research often does find later application as applied research).

One of the many strands of discussion surrounding Mode 1/ Mode 2 research is the idea that the two support and enable each other, and a good research strategy arguably needs both in an integrated and combined way. The terms Mode 1.5 (Huff, 2000) and Mode 3 (Starkey, 2001) and 'pragmatic research' (Hodgkinson et al, 2001) have been coined to refer to this. An essential paradox of discussion of Mode 1 / Mode 2 research is that this itself tends to be abstract and theoretical, and in this sense is conducted in the form and language of Mode 1 research. The Mode 1 style discussion of the Mode 1 / 2 question is exemplified by the special issue of the British Journal of Management (Hodgkinson, 2001), which largely falls into this pattern, though Weik (2001) gives some tantalising glimpses of mode 2 in practice.

For those, including the authors of this paper, who believe in the usefulness of Mode 2 research, the problem with the Mode 1 discussion of the Mode 1 / 2 issue is that this can actually be part of the problem, by continuing in Mode 1 style, rather than part of the solution, which would be moving to elements of Mode 2 in practice. In the sense that ideas about emotions are not emotions, and menus and recipes are not meals (to take these examples of 'category errors' as developed by Bateson (1973)), and descriptions or specifications of 'competencies' in organisations are not the same thing as actual competence, the discussion of Mode 2 research is not Mode 2 research. There is a sense in which the paradox seems inescapable – a reflexive point being that this very discussion of the Mode 1 dominance in the discussion of Mode 1 / 2 research is itself a continuation of the Mode 1 dominance.

The authors' experience of conducting this research is one of contrasts and tensions with what might be regarded as the traditional way of conducting Mode 1 research.

We do not expect to be able to transcend the paradox of the discussion of the Mode 1 – Mode 2 difference itself having a tendency to be a Mode 1 discussion, but we do want to make our discussion one that is grounded as far as possible in the conduct of (largely) Mode 2 research in the hope that this will be of assistance to those who may themselves wish to conduct it.

In the concluding section we discuss the issues encountered in this project on corporate leadership development, as a case in conducting research with a substantial Mode 2 purpose.

CEML Leadership Development Best Practice Research; a Mode 2 case study

The brief provided by the Working Group was to produce a best practice guide with specific guidelines on leadership development for corporations. It was to be evidence based and with a strategic focus. It had to meet a tight time schedule, including dissemination. From the Working Group's perspective this was a clear brief, with the scope narrowed to a manageable size (produce a Guide) from an original vague brief (make UK corporate leadership 'world class'). Thus the scope of the research was developed by the practitioners comprising the Working group and the joint working and frequent meetings between the researchers, the Working group and the Working group Chair were significant in shaping the research at the outset and troughout the year long project.

A key decision was selection of organisations to study; a rationale for inclusion as 'best practice' was required. This led to the first of many tensions to be managed. It was more obvious to the practitioners what constituted best practice than to the researchers. An organisation that has been in the top league for some time must be doing something right and is worth studying. A discussion amongst members of the Working Group could provide some consensus on who should be included in the project. The researchers wanted to explore what 'best practice' might mean. They also wanted to know what existing research might inform the study. The Working Group was anxious that they might be led down some 'academic' *cul de sac.*

The Working Group also wanted a prescriptive outcome, believing that research could identify the 'right' and definitive view. An interesting moment arose when the question was asked, 'what if the research tells us we should all have a corporate university?' There was debate and it became clear that this was not going to be as easy as it seemed. A literature review was then agreed. This enabled the researchers to come back with research proposals and formed the first tangible project output (Author, 20xx).

This process was typical in the project: the researchers appearing more cautious than the Working Group would have liked. In turn the researchers had to work to a brief that was both more precise and ambitious than they might have chosen.

'Best practice' in published cases.

The literature search focused mainly on studies reported in the years since 1995, as these would probably refer to data collected in or before 1993. In a rapidly changing

world this was taken as an appropriate time frame. Older ideas standing the test of time were reflected in these papers. The search looked for case studies in leadership and management development, corporate management development, succession and career planning. The papers selected for the review contained evidence-based material, were published in good journals or offered collated evidence from other studies.

There are at least two sources of difficulty in choosing organisations that might provide best practice cases; firstly, the selection involves subjective assessment that might pre-judge the nature of best practice that is to be discovered from the evidence. Secondly, the selection implies locating best practice that can be of general benefit.

The first issue had been addressed by several studies. Fulmer and Wagner (1999) undertook sponsored research for the American Society for Training and Development, the American Productivity and Quality Center and TPG Learning Systems. The best practice selection involved the initial analysis of potential organisations by the research team from journals and sponsors' suggestions. There then followed an evaluation of potential best practice partners through a screening survey of more than thirty organisations to select ten finalists and the selection of six best practice partners from these by the study's sponsors.

The Corporate Leadership Council (1997) conducted telephone interviews and on site visits to 150 companies, interviewed 50 academics, consultants and industry experts and reviewed 10,000 pages of academic and business literature to identify suitable

cases from which they developed a framework for leadership development, resourcing and retention.

Brown (2000) used the criteria developed in these two studies above to choose organisations that fit the 'best practice' criteria commensurate with the findings of these studies. Others have simply gone for household names which by common sense must be doing something right to be an effective, sustained, global competitor. These have yielded similar best practice exemplars to those identified the studies attempting a more rigorous selection (e.g. Stevens, 1996, Davies et al, 1998). In fact the Working Group's initial assessment was not significantly different from published sources.

A second concern is finding reports of practice and those studies that provide some evidence with 'transfer' value to other organisations. Fulmer (1997), building on Conger (1993), argues that such maps of leadership development are as out of date as Columbus' maps of the New World and need re-drawing. Generic capabilities such as being globally aware, capable of managing highly decentralised organisations, sensitivity to issues of diversity, being interpersonally competent are needed at all levels. However, leadership development needs to emphasise customised programmes created to help achieve specific corporate objectives not just generic capabilities.

Much discussion centred on learning methodologies. For example, Zenger et al. (2000), Brown (1999), Vicere and Fulmer (1997) argue for fundamental change. The change of emphasis is from learning approaches based on receiving knowledge from specialists to an emphasis on process/outcome driven and collective learning. Active learning methods with real challenges using real work time will be used more. The

need to focus on competencies and skills strategically aligned to company needs places emphasis on learning embedded in business. Universities will still be used to provide cutting edge thinking but must rely less on professors' inputs and more on applied work to organisation challenges. According to Fulmer, British Business Schools are better than Americans at client partnership and applied learning.

CEO involvement is central to leadership development (Cohen and Tichy, 1997, Eller, 1995); the best companies use top leaders to develop leaders. The Corporate Leadership Council (1997) identified two critical success factors combining action learning and CEO involvement. Business strategy must identify leadership competencies; this is built on by practices such as an annual audit of leadership by the CEO, each member of a company's executive assessing and developing high potentials. Engaging the strategic agenda involves high profile assignments sponsored by the CEO intended to provide maximum learning and benefit the company.

Heifetz and Laurie (1997) review the key work of leadership and explore how this relates to leadership development. In their case study the philosophy of leadership desired in the organisation was a key determinant of the development practice embraced. Thus in the case they describe large-scale cultural change projects involving cross-functional teams taken 'off line' to develop new ways of working, reflecting the CEO and consultants views of the nature of leadership itself.

The implicit philosophy of leadership is particularly crucial in the issue of diversity. Many leadership development programmes include cross-cultural experience and global business issues but these may not address other diversity issues such as gender

or ethnicity. Multi-national leadership talent pools may not lead to diversity of perspective at the top if women and ethnic minorities are under-represented, a condition that persists and may be undesirable (Singh, Vinnicombe and Johnson, 2000, Daily, Certo and Dalton, 1999, Fondas and Sassalos, 2000). Hildebrand (1996) argues that companies can use leadership training to increase diversity. However, tacit leadership concepts and assumptions that underpin programmes mean that women and non-Caucasians may be unsupported in the development process (Ibarra, 1993, and Ragins and Cotton, 1999). Diversity at the top is part of creating high performing organisations (Orser, 2000) but there is still a need for leadership development that enables minorities and females to break through at strategic leader levels in greater numbers (Ragins, Townsend and Mattis, 1998, Vinnicombe, 2000, Burke and Mattis, 2000).

Conclusions from literature review

Despite attempts to rationalise choice of organisations to study, the main basis is subjective consensus- that organisations that are successful in broader performance measurement terms, 'must be doing something right'. Studies in the US tend to choose US companies, presumably because they are personally known to those consulted.

The importance of linking leader development to business objectives was underlined. Thus, learning methods are needed that contextualise the learning and development of participants. However, it is recognised that leading edge thinking must be included in the development of senior executives and universities and courses may provide a route to incorporating this. The idea that development of leaders and development of

the business go hand in hand has led to widespread involvement of CEOs in leadership development. Leadership development activities must embrace issues such as diversity. It is not a case of just trying to include under-represented groups in leadership programmes because leadership development is not separate from the organisation's philosophy of leadership.

The empirical research phase

Based on the literature the researchers decided to explore the process of developing a leadership development strategy that was contextual and suited to the organisation's specific situation. Since the literature placed emphasis on alignment of the business vision and strategy with leadership development the evidence would be collected from executives at Group HR Director level to capture the organisational issues. Case examples, however, could provide a useful output to ground the principles in practice. The research would form the route finder through the leadership development territory. A semi-structured interview would enable informants to see the scope of the interview in advance in order to assemble information and focus their thinking and cover all the areas that the research was covering, at the same time allowing the informant to focus on the issues most relevant and important to the organisation context.

The interview protocol had questions framed to explore 'why' and 'how did you decide' as well as 'what', covering the integration of leadership development with business strategy, assumptions of leadership underpinning the development philosophy, choices driven by specific contextual factors, non-HR contributions as well as expert roles, policies for attraction and retention, deployment for development

as well as training programmes. Open questions allowed the story of leadership development to unfold. Informants could prepare by having indicative questions and topic areas in advance. The researchers were interested in uncovering the 'theory of leadership development in use'.

Conduct of the research

This framing of the research meant that a number of organisational contributions were needed but these did not have to constitute a definitive sample of organisations 'who are the best'. The Working Group was able to offer high-level access to organisations within the scope of the study. Organisations are shown in Table 1.

The researchers had access to extensive interview time with main board directors who cleared their diaries with only a few days or weeks notice. Whilst many organisations could have fallen within the remit, the researchers did ask for and get access to a range of categories of organisations the Working Group regarded as reflecting the type of organisations at which the project was aimed. The initial sample included two retail organisations, two banks, two engineering companies, two pharmaceutical companies, two computer companies, two public sector organisations as well an oil company and a new company encompassing household name organisations.

The researchers decided to conduct interviews until there was a replication of the emerging issues. Although this might not be theoretical saturation, given the selected sample of informants, this would provide a basis for a first cut at analysing the data. The analysis would be written up and returned for comment. Thus any major omissions resulting from interviews gaps might be picked up and misinterpretations

could be corrected. This iterative process was repeated at later stages; the second stage was a consultation of other organisations and members of the Working Group. Although the research output would be aimed primarily at the corporate sector the inclusion of the public sector became important because of wide ranging use of the project being forecast.

- Table 1 here -

Each set of interview data was sorted into areas scoped in the interview protocols. Themes were established by studying each interview and then by exploring the similarities and differences in organisation's approaches. The presence or absence of themes in the transcripts was noted; organisations sometimes reported the importance of a practice but simultaneously recognised they did not do this very well or that they were at the early stages of dealing with an issue. This happened with issues of evaluation for example, and with what became identified as the four issues of ecology, diversity, ethics and good employer practice. Themes were later reworked; for example, a theme on corporate universities was later included in a theme on use of in house or external resources. The process was one of looking for patterns in the data.

Findings; principles and issues in leadership development practice.

The idea of using the term 'principles' emerged and was used to mean the key assumptions that need to be clarified and decision points that underpinned the practices described. Comments from the initial informants and those consulted in the second stage and the Working Party were subsequently used to modify these.

Principles would not prescribe practices that should be adopted but describe a process that would enable an organisation to reflect on its current and desired position.

Presentation of the findings was based on learning principles of reflecting on practice rather than on descriptions of reported methods and consulting examples *per se*. This would bridge the Working Group's specification of a prescriptive output and the literature demonstrating the complex relationship between leadership development practices and business imperatives. It would be a vehicle for learning about potential improvements in practice, an aid for 'reflexive practitioners' (Schon, 1983). As Starkey and Madan (2001, p4) observe 'a key goal in the research-practice relationship is the development of forms of knowledge that help managers become better reflective practitioners by a critical reflection upon the often un-examined mental models that inform our actions'.

The principles were grouped as strategic imperatives (difficult to produce a coherent set of practices if the organisation does not address these), strategic choices (principles that an organisation needed to address to begin to put a leadership development strategy in place) and the principle of evaluation. Another set of themes emerged about organisation values that were mentioned as 'shoulds and oughts' by informants as issues that organisations need to clarify their position on and make clear corporate statements about. These were diversity, ecology, ethics and good employer responsibilities Taken together these principles and issues appeared to provide an umbrella for making sense of the detailed accounts collected and could encompass the differences that the data showed between the organisations. These are shown in Table 2 but for a fuller explication see Authors(20xx).

This was where the research data effectively ended. The researchers, themselves involved extensively in leadership development practice, used the research findings and the data to produce additional implementation material. This was reviewed and agreed with the Working Group. This material comprised a step-by-step approach to using the research findings, a set of case examples and a tool kit for working through the material. The Guide is thus a set of tools to reflect on practice with the principles and issues as the 'route-finder'. Thus the guide was normative and specific in how to this and in so far as it implies reflection and learning is appropriate. It did not provide a blue print for leadership development activity, or to continue the map and route-finder analogy, it did not specify the destination or a single route to a destination. The research was published as a best practice guide on leadership development (Authors, 20xx) and was made available in print and web-based versions The research was only considered complete when the dissemination process allowed it to become actionable.

Table 2; principles for developing leadership development practice

The strategic imperatives call for the organisation to have a leadership development approach that is

- Driven from the top with specialist support; leadership development drives and supports the organisation
- Reflects the concepts of leadership held by the Chief Executive/top team, the organisational culture and values--this impacts the choice and style of leadership development activity
- Reflects needs of culture(s) in which the organisation is embedded

The strategic choices involve decisions about

- An articulated framework for career and management development (how transparent is it, is there a fast track or talent pool approach?)

- Balance between, and intentional use of, both formal and informal development opportunities

- Growing your own vs. Recruiting senior leadership talent

- Considered use of Business Schools and other external resources

- 'Leaders' and 'managers'; whether to establish a competency or other framework that suits the organisation

- Retention and reward strategies, including non financial rewards

And evaluation, involving an explicit approach at two levels

- A review of leadership development *strategy* against the strategic imperative principles and the strategic choice principles

- A commitment to evaluate *practice*

The investigation as a case of 'Mode 2' Research

Using a grounded theory approach(Glaser and Straus, 1968), we have attempted to isolate the minimum number and set of key ideas that captures our experience of conducting Mode 2 research, as contextualised in this case study. These come down to six, which are *the immediate experienced differences, the nature and kind of theory involved, the orientation to time, the possibilities of agency, the nature of effects,* and *the legitimation of conclusions.*

The 'opposing' differences

As exemplified by this project, six things have struck us as different from what might be regarded as classic Mode 1 style of research.

The first is to do with the size of problem. In our case we were faced with the problem of defining best practice in organisations for leadership development. In this kind of study that the problem as set is addressed. I In Mode 1 research the approach would be to narrow and simplify the question to make it more easily addressable – to simplify the question until it could be confidently addressed with existing methodology. In contrast the orientation becomes one of having a risky shot at a big question, rather than a safer one at a small question.

The second issue is to do with time-scale. Mode 2 research tends to have a deadline, and to be oriented to finding a solution to a problem that is causing harm *now*, creating urgency about producing a solution. The active time-scale of this project was about ten months, including problem definition, literature searching, case study collection, sense making, writing and dissemination and all this in regular consultation with the steering committee. Our sense is that more traditional Mode one research would address such an issue on a two/three year time-scale.

Thirdly, our experience was that while resources (mainly money for staff time) were available, they were still limited and had to be argued for, justified and set up. While the scale of the resources was not necessarily greater or less than for Mode one research, the main issue was how to make best use of them within the time-scale,

which meant that the pressure on resources to, say, obtain literature fast, and do fieldwork with busy informants, was much more challenging.

Finally, as a Mode 2 study the investigation did have a customer/ client/ problem owner, primarily in the form of the steering group. This group was actively involved in the co-production of knowledge on best practice in leadership development, with the researchers. This feels a contrast to more traditional Mode one research which, although often having a sponsor with an interest and concern that the research gets done, and output delivered, there is much less of an immediate concern with the content of the output. Our experience was not one of what might be the stereotype of Mode 2 research – a client who thinks they know what the research output should be, but of one that had a strong interest in this and a concern that the output should look 'justifiable' in terms of the method of arriving at it, and also relevant/useful, as they experienced it, and presented in a form that would assist this use. From the point of view of the researchers this did create a demand for dialogue with the steering group, in a context where not all members agreed with each other all the time. This was far from an impossible demand, but it did take time and effort, and hence constituted a demand on resources, and posed challenges in keeping the project on a project management timetable to produce conclusions, while at the same time being open to adaptation and change in the light of discussions with the steering group.

Kinds of theory

The nature of Mode 2 research demands a kind of theoretical output that we would call normative. This means that it produces a 'should do' answer. It has been suggested that there are four kinds of theory (Burgoyne 1998) with which research

can be concerned, both in terms of what it uses and reviews, and in terms of what it produces. These are:

Normative theories that suggest what should be done, *descriptive theories* that attempt to describe how things are, *analytical theories* that attempt to explain why things are as they are, and *critical theories* that attempt to challenge, and offer alternatives to, the way things are described and interpreted.

What seems interesting is that in the domain of Mode 2, the order of preference for these different kinds of theories is in neat reversal from the preferences in Mode 1 research. Our sense of the valuation of these types of theories from a Mode 1 point of view is that the normative is most suspect, containing unchallenged and unjustified value judgments, descriptive is perhaps useful but stopping short of anything interesting, analytical is of interest since it seeks to address why things are as they are, and the critical is the preferred Mode, challenging and proposing alternatives to the perspectives taken in analytical (and normative) theorising.

The Mode 2, perspective on research appears to follow the reverse: normative theory is really the only kind worth having, since it addresses the key question of *what should be done?* – with as much evidence based and inductive justification as possible. Descriptive theory has a place in marking 'how things are' to define a starting point for problem solution. Analytical and critical theories appear of less interest since they are oriented to explanations and criticism, and shun 'what to do'. More sophisticated Mode 2 attitudes to the analytical and critical may however value them respectively for their potential to identify mechanisms that could be activated for

practical purposes, and a contribution to the contested discourse from which a *'should'* view of the world might be justified.

Time orientation

There is a strong sense in Mode 2 research that there is a time-scale that matters, and that there are deadlines to meet. This does not mean that deadlines cannot, and do not, slip, which they do. However, as Weick (2001) suggests, there is the possibility of research fundings arriving too late for a decision required to be made at a point in time, or to address a perceived problem of urgency. In Mode 1, research which is oriented to a contribution to enduring knowledge, there is a priority of rigour over urgency, and the implied tradeoff wieghts in favour of accuracy over urgency.Mode 1 research does increasingly work to planned timetables, but there is none the less an attitude within it that conclusions should take as long as they take, if conclusions are produced at a point in time, then it is usually with suitable cautions and reservations about the provisional nature of the conclusions and what might be possible with more time and effort. An important output of Mode 1 research is often a proposal for questions and methods for further research.

The possibility of agency

In the sense in which Mode 2 research, is defined as addressing situations that could be made 'better' by deliberate and planned effort, then there is an applied assumption about the possibility of a least a degree of agency – the ability to be an agent for planned change. This is at odds with the extreme alternative view in the well-worn agency – structure debate, that the way things are is the product of deep seated, and possibly enduring and permanent structures. In this sense the alternative view is a

fatalistic one of 'what will happen will happen' and the future as being pre-defined. Beyond this potentially sterile and non-resolvable debate is the observation, for Mode 2 research, that policy makers have 'agency' but the world they work on operates on 'structure', so that it is a machine that policy makers can control by pulling the relevant leavers, the identification of which is the job of Mode 2 research. The Mode 1 attitude can have a parallel implied view of the world: the world may well be explainable in largely structural terms, but the proposes of these Mode 1 structural theories appear to reserve for themselves the agentic capacity to propose and choose between structural theories. It seems to us that the Mode 1 / Mode 2 debate poses a special challenge and opportunity to develop a view of agency and regularity that might reconcile the two approaches to research, and assist in their working together.

The nature of effects

Perhaps as an extension of this debate, or the other side of the same coin, is the assumption of Mode 2 research that there is at least the possibility of some notion of causality or effect, if only a weak, situational and contingent one, in which a course of action can be judged to have at least a reasonable possibility of leading to a desired state of affairs. Much contested and discussed issues of ontology and epistemology lie behind this assumption, which are addressed much more in Mode 1 than Mode 2 discourse. This poses the challenge of how to conduct this analysis in the domain of Mode 2, without switching it back to the domain of Mode 1 – a theme of this paper.

The legitimation of conclusions – and conclusion

Our final observation on the contrasts between Mode 1 and Mode 2 research, as embodied in the attempt reported here to do the latter, is over the legitimation of conclusions.

Here different mindsets seem to be in operation. The Mode 1 mindset says 'only come up with a conclusion that can be justified on the grounds of the way it has been arrived at, and qualify it with kinds of reservations to show the limitations of the legitimatory approach used.'

The Mode 2 mindset, at least implicitly, takes the view that 'there is an issue, problem, choice, policy dilemma about which choice is going to be made, and action taken any way. The challenge is to make some kind of contribution to the evidence base in which the decision is taken and the action chosen, and the rigour of the process by which the conclusion is arrived at'.

The legitimacy process in Mode 2 research appears to need more careful consideration, in its own terms, though in some areas, like evaluation research, a start has been made (Patton, 1998).

Our final summary conclusions are two.

Firstly that, in the Mode 1 / Mode 2 debate there may be a variant of the 'paradigm incomensurability' phenomena (as originally proposed by Burrell and Morgan (1979)). This means world views that make sense within their own terms, can and do

have a critical and dismissive take on other world views from their own perspective, but for which there lacks any neutral or independent conceptual (or practical) perspective from which to adjudicate. Our interpretation has been that the Mode 1 / Mode 2 debate has been largely conducted on and from Mode 1 territory, and we have commented on the very nature of the textual medium of the written and presented paper as defining the playing field in this way. We have attempted in this paper, to play an 'away game', through the device of a case study of applied research and some reflections on the experience of doing this, to highlight something more of the Mode 2 perspective in a way that hangs onto at least some of its own paradigmatic position.

Our final comment is that it may not be an accident that this attempt to push open the door a little more on a Mode 2 research perspective has arisen in the context of research on leadership and organisational leadership good practice definition and dissemination. It may be that what is seeking expression in the new demand for leadership has something in common with Mode 2 research in the shape of a search for an individual and collective form of agency from which to have an effect on the world which can be seen as 'betterment'. It could also be suggested, that the space for the new need and concern for leadership has been at least part created by the tradition of Mode 1 research on its close relation 'management' which has had the effect of disabling the latter from addressing the issues that underlies the new interest in leadership. We have identified the issue and challenge of levelling the playing field between the Mode 2 and Mode 1 orientation in debates on this issue of the kind exemplified by the BJM special issue (Hodgkinson 2001).

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Table 1 Organisations contributing to the research
Working Group, steering project; BP Amoco (chair), IBM, Prudential, BBC, BT, Rolls Royce, John Lewis, BAe, Cabinet Office   **Initial Interviews**; HSBC, Standard Chartered Bank, Tesco, BAe, John Lewis, Cabinet Office, Smith Kline-Glaxo Wellcome , Centrica , Logica , BP Amoco, Astra Zeneca , Rolls Royce   **Interviewed / consulted on draft findings**; Barclays Bank, Marconi, Sun Microsystems, Oxfordshire CC, Reading BC, King's College NHS Trust, Commission for Health Improvement, qxl.com, Motorola