

Abstract of Keynote Speech by Professor James O'Toole

The New Leadership

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In addition to the growth of the services sector, equally transformative changes in technology, the structure of the global economy and, especially, social expectations have created the necessity of a new form of business leadership. Today and moving forward, business executives no longer can be authoritarians or even behave paternalistically. In order to be effective, leaders must set aside the culturally conditioned “natural” instinct to lead by *push* and, instead, adopt the unnatural behavior of leading by the *pull* of inspiring values. In Asia and in the West, more and more services-sector leaders are discovering that, to effectively serve their customers, they must learn to create conditions under which their employees can contribute not only with their hands but with their heads, as well. In order to enlist the minds (and hearts) of their followers, leaders must address their true needs because people will no longer follow those who seek only to serve themselves. The proven method for achieving that is through creating people-centered organizational cultures whose leaders display “a caring style of leadership” and where employees participate in the decisions that affect their work (and, increasingly, participate in ownership of firms). This form of leadership should not be seen as “weak” or “passive.” As the practical examples offered in the keynote address will illustrate, the more power the leaders give to others, paradoxically, the more they have themselves. Not only is this New Leadership desirable because it is the most effective form, it also is based in the fundamental moral principle found in all the world’s great religions: respect for people.