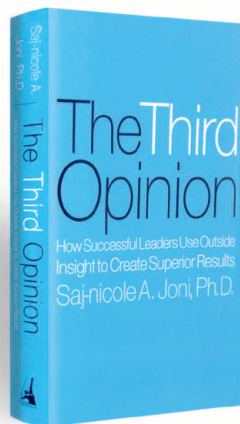




# Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: LEADERSHIP



By Saj-nicole A. Joni, Ph.D.

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## How Successful Leaders Use Outside Insight To Create Superior Results

# THE THIRD OPINION

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*The 21st century has dawned, and the requirements for leadership have fundamentally changed. Every day, leaders around the world face issues of complexity, uncertainty and sensitivity, requiring precise thinking and judgment at warp speed. Speed is a given, expertise is fleeting, and learning to trust others in your organization is trickier than ever. Authority has given way to influence. The leadership bar has been raised.*

*In The Third Opinion, Dr. Saj-nicole A. Joni notes that the raising of the bar has given way to an even greater challenge for leaders — determining to whom they can turn when experienced, trustworthy advice is required. Some leaders might turn to colleagues inside the organization for help; others might call upon a trusted adviser outside the company. There is, however, another opinion for which most people never ask: the third opinion — the unvarnished insight of a loyal and diverse inner circle of advisers, experts and mentors. This “outside insight” might just be the most important advice of all.*

### What You'll Learn In This Summary

- ✓ Leadership today requires three new habits: Habit of Mind, Habit of Relationship, and Habit of Focus. Used together, these habits enable you to build a powerful leadership circle and lead with the benefits of outside insight.
- ✓ Leaders must also master three distinct types of thinking: Application Thinking, Expert Thinking, and, most importantly, Exponential Thinking.
- ✓ Leaders must be naturally curious and possess a solid knowledge of their own preferences, styles and foibles in leadership and thinking. This self-knowledge is essential in building an inner circle of advisers, because you must know how you will work with your advisers and be able to accurately guess how well they will work with you.
- ✓ The progression of one's need for an inner circle of advisers is directly related to the progression of one's leadership career. Based on levels of organizational or structural responsibility, three broad distinctions are defined — Early Leadership, Key Leadership, and Senior Leadership.

# THE THIRD OPINION

by Saj-nicole A. Joni, Ph.D.

## — THE COMPLETE SUMMARY

### Outside Insight

Leadership today requires three new habits:

● **Habit of Mind.** Leaders today must master a new level of thinking: exponential thinking — the process of examining context, looking for interrelationships, exploring assumptions, and asking questions that reveal the full truth and potential of a situation. This thinking enables you to see all sides of a complex issue, most often in the company of other, like-minded individuals. Indeed, successful leaders need to regularly spend time with thinking partners they trust, because exponential thinking is best done with others.

● **Habit of Relationship.** Leaders must assemble a new kind of leadership team: one that ensures that they undertake the right kind of exploratory thinking and are challenged by multiple perspectives. This leadership team must be comprised of an action team and an inquiry team that are capable of translating exponential thinking into useful action.

● **Habit of Focus.** Leaders must have the skill and discipline to focus on the essential nonurgent issues.

### Important Inner-Circle Conversations

Conversations with inner-circle thinking partners are broad-ranging and typically fall into one or more of these four basic categories:

✓ **The visionary conversation**, which imagines the different possible futures that you might create, then determines how to use that insight in the here and now.

✓ **The sounding board conversation**, which takes place when you want to work with someone who has the right expertise, wisdom and experience to take a third-opinion look at a new strategy or set of ideas.

✓ **The big picture conversation**, in which you and a thinking partner step back and look at all the things that are going on, making sure that where you want to go is aligned with all the complex and interdependent parts involved in getting there.

✓ **The “expertise in inquiry” conversation**, in which you look not only to develop your knowledge, but also to develop fundamental models and new ways of thinking about the terrain.

They must be able to create and execute strategies to carry out their leadership agendas. They must be able to use their inquiry teams and advisory network to get this critical work done, and done properly.

Used together, these habits enable you to build a powerful leadership circle and lead with the benefits of outside insight. These habits are critical to what kind of leader you will be. They distinguish your leadership and your career trajectory.

You can begin developing the three habits and your advisory network at any time during your career. It is important to develop and use the three habits in concert. While everyone will use them differently, there are guidelines to help you focus on perfecting the various parts of each habit as your leadership progresses. In addition, your source of outside insight will likely differ from that of any other leader. The thing to remember is to keep your advisory team a balance of formal and informal sources.

### Thinking Partners

Thinking partners are exponential thinkers who are able to offer you new information and new lines of sight. The best thinking partners have a well-developed ability to think across parochial boundaries; they also possess an aptitude for detecting interdependencies, and they know how, fundamentally, to see a problem at several different levels. They also have the ability to pick the right level for the best solution.

There are a number of capabilities you should seek in your inner-circle thinking partners. They should ask great

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### Outside Insight

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questions and listen closely. They should have reputations for integrity, and high-quality experience relevant to the key issues you need to resolve. They should be flexible, providing unique perspectives and tailoring their input to meet the challenges and questions at hand. They should have curiosity and an intuitive understanding of your strengths. They should be free from conflict of interest, both personal and structural. They should also be as eager to work with you as you are to work with them. ■

### Habit of Mind

There are three facets to the Habit of Mind: *mastery of three levels of thinking, curiosity and self-knowledge, and spotting great talent for your inquiry team.*

#### *Mastery of Three Levels of Thinking*

Leaders today must extend their abilities to integrate new and old information, plan more flexibly, and be ready to redefine the very way they understand their job, company and marketplace. In order to do so, they must develop mastery in three types of thinking:

- **Application thinking** (mapping the *known* onto the *unknown*). You must focus on planning and implementing well-understood methods in ways that yield replicable results. People skilled in application thinking can readily identify the characteristics of a problem and, with the benefits of experience and history, find a solution.

- **Expert thinking** (invoking deep understanding of a specific subject). Expert thinking is brought to bear when challenges and issues are new or unique and don't fit easily into a solution by a known method.

Approaching the issue from their area of expertise, expert thinkers bring new perspective to diagnosis, and the knowledge and problem-solving skills to develop custom approaches and solutions.

- **Exponential thinking** (exploring new terrain with new frameworks). Inherent in the nature of exponential thinking is the need to engage with others who bring different perspectives and who are capable of helping you explore issues outside your awareness, mental models, and current understanding. Until you master exponential thinking, you cannot take full advantage of the third opinion.

#### *Curiosity and Self-Knowledge*

It is essential in this day and age to have a realistic picture of yourself — an accurate picture of how you function best within your organization. This is particularly true as you develop thinking partners and pursue exponential thinking.

A good leader is a curious leader. Good leaders pos-

## The Six Steps for Exponential Thinking

In order to master exponential thinking, there are six steps to follow. These include:

- 1. Understand the mental models that guide your thinking.** What are the assumptions about how your business works — about the marketplaces in which your company sells, the key levers of change in those marketplaces, and the nature of your competition? These mental models deeply impact how we make sense of the world and how we choose to act. We must be aware of these models, both in ourselves and in others.

- 2. Develop your ability to discern patterns.** We must look for patterns that dictate how we make sense of the world, particularly when an existing pattern cannot explain a new business element or pattern. Recognizing these patterns is an essential business leadership skill.

- 3. Check and recheck for hidden assumptions.** In order to understand the challenges we contend with today and will contend with in the future, we must unearth and examine our assumptions about how business is conducted.

- 4. Create varied scenarios of the future.** Exponential thinkers consider mental models, patterns and assumptions, and use them to develop a portfolio of scenarios for the future. They also possess the ability and judgment to create multiple views of the future, compare one to the other, determine their probabilities, and commit to a course of action that is powerful, yet flexible.

- 5. Look for ways to brighten your line of sight.** You must think very carefully about how you get your information, its sources, and its sources' sources. What filters have come between you and the data you use to make important business decisions?

- 6. Invest in your ability to think in the gray space.** Leaders who take their organizations to new heights of success have no established references to sort out the big picture — they must discover that new reality, pushing the boundaries of what's known, acceptable, legal, comfortable and practical.

sess a self-confidence that enables them to remain open and inquisitive, even on the occasions when they might be wrong. They want to know more than just how to get something done: They want to understand the principles that underlie an issue, and when these principles apply (or don't).

A good leader also understands his or her managerial style. Good leaders ask themselves, How do I fill up my time — in face-to-face meetings or solo work? Am I

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### Habit of Mind

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more energized by meeting with people, or by working alone? Do I thrive on chaos, or do I work better when everything is in its proper place, and activity is quiet and purposeful? Leaders ask these and other self-auditing questions on a regular basis.

Good leaders are aware of their style of thinking around others, and how they process information in general. Some leaders prefer lively debates on issues; others are better suited listening to a discussion and following their intuition after collecting everyone's opinions. Knowing your own style will help you complement that style with others in your inner circle. You should also know the ways in which you learn the best. Are you a more visual learner, or do you need to have conversations to hash out the particulars of an issue? Do you understand interrelationships best when they are presented to you, or when you experience them? Knowing your capacities for processing information (and developing new ones) will help you get your information in a form or format that you will be able to integrate best.

Good leaders also do not believe their own hype. If you are featured in a publication or some other media outlet, you must be cognizant of how you're being presented, and what that presentation means to your exponential thinking and your thinking partners. Don't let your personal branding get in the way of the quality of your interactions at work.

### Spotting Great Talent for Your Inquiry Team

In order to build a dependable leadership circle, you must be able to develop an ability to evaluate others and their strengths, weaknesses, preferences and biases. Distinguishing between the roles of adviser and thinking partner helps you develop the advisory network that is most relevant to you and your leadership challenges. You must also distinguish between those colleagues who are superior advisory resources and those who are better thinking partners, in order to cultivate the right group of leaders around you.

### The Habit of Relationship

You need to understand how you work with team members and thinking partners (your Habit of Relationship) to ensure that you undertake the right kind of thinking (your Habit of Mind) on the important issues. In fully engaged exponential thinking with others, you:

- Listen.
- Are willing to be wrong.
- Ask for help.
- Create an environment in which people feel safe expressing opinions.

## Four Signs That It's Time to Reach for the Third Opinion

There are a number of patterns that emerge when you feel the need to reach for your inner circle, including:

- ✓ When you know you're capable of taking action, but you're unable to focus for the requisite amount of time.
- ✓ When you feel your organization will be in serious trouble if you don't do the right thing.
- ✓ When you know you shouldn't tackle an issue on your own, regardless of whether you have the time.
- ✓ When you know you're capable of taking action, but you also know you'll be better off if you think through your options with someone else.

Trust takes time; most leaders start building their inner circles as an Early Leader and allow them to evolve over the course of their careers. It's never too late to start, and the trust and perspective afforded you through building your inner circle have never been more critical.

- Share the spotlight.
- Know when to do expert and exponential thinking.
- Think about yourself as part of a larger whole, or many larger wholes.
- Are committed to developing your own capacity and that of others.

Knowing yourself — your gifts and faults alike — is the starting point for creating opportunities through the three habits. The next step is to build relationships that support and sustain your leadership with trust. Trust is dynamic. It is the central question of leadership and an issue that leaders must regularly revisit.

### Understanding Trust

There are three fundamental distinctions of trust that leaders must understand and develop:

**1. Personal trust.** This is the trust that develops in the workplace from shared tasks and an understanding of your colleagues' strengths, weaknesses, preferences and the like — in other words, what makes them tick. For most people, this is the basic meaning of trust, which becomes problematic as you move “up the ladder,” and your colleagues come to you looking for **a**) the same old trust, and **b**) access to power. You must understand this, grapple with your new roles, and tailor your thoughts and actions to meet new professional (not personal) responsibilities.

**2. Expertise trust.** This is the trust that comes from competence and knowledge in a particular subject matter or process. It focuses on knowledge, judgment and thinking abilities. As you proceed through the ranks, you must

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### Habit of Mind

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be able to discern quickly to what degree you can trust the expertise of the people you come across, regardless of the level of personal trust you might establish with them.

**3. Structural trust.** This type of trust refers to how much someone's position or role affects your confidence that he or she will be able to deal with you straightforwardly. It is the kind of trust that changes the most as you become more senior in your company, since with higher rank comes the greater likelihood that people will want to influence your thinking for their own purposes.

### The Nature of Relationships

The nature of your relationships becomes much more complex as you rise through the leadership ranks. Think of your relationships in terms of three distinct categories: action vs. inquiry, internal vs. external, and working vs. inner circles.

You need *action* teams to carry out the day-to-day business of your organization — fighting fires, solving problems, setting and meeting goals, and so forth. Beyond that, however, you also need teams of *inquiry*, to help you think beyond what's urgent and immediate to what's important and long-lasting. Of course, action and inquiry will not always be independent realms — intertwining the two helps drive results and performance.

### Internal and External Circles

You must also build your *internal* and *external* circles, creating connection between the world of your organization and the world outside. This is not to say that you must develop powerful resources in your external network to compensate for weaker internal teams or other deficiencies within your organization. On the contrary — the better your internal teams are, the better your external teams need to be, to provide vital processes, practices and data outside organizational boundaries and put them to work inside.

Your working circle is the essence of your daily work life. It is comprised of those with whom you are regularly in contact and on whom you count as resources. Your inner circle is increasingly important as you rise through the ranks. As an Early Leader, your inner circle will likely include key staff members, supervisors, team leaders, and other colleagues with whom you work intensely. As you move through the ranks of Key and Senior Leadership, with their broad responsibilities, you will see distinctions between your working circle and inner circle. Being clear about the distinctions between the two enables you to focus, effectively delegate, and leverage your time. ■

For additional information on not believing your own hype, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

### Habit of Focus

The hardest part of leadership is to keep sustained focus on essential topics and data, not just the urgent, *gotta-do-it-now* needs. If too much of your work is urgent, you are not appropriately focused on what is important. You are merely careening from crisis to crisis. Mastering the Habit of Focus — the ability to move forward with important but nonurgent issues in a chaotic, high-pressure environment — is crucial to effective leadership.

You must devote your most precious resource — your unscheduled time — to the most important issues that affect you: the ones that hold the greatest potential to yield the highest returns over time. This includes using your time for reflection and inquiry — a much more difficult thing to do than you might think. The great gravitational force of the workday gives immediate tasks too much pull. Without planning things carefully, you will likely find your time constantly slipping away.

### Focus Is Your Responsibility

You and you alone are responsible for your focus. If you intend to focus on some important issue that reaches beyond urgent, day-to-day matters, you must make it a real part of your work. You need to schedule time, space and resources to address the issue, or it won't happen. Urgent issues have huge pull and will take up all your time and then some if you let them. The Habit of Focus uses your Habit of Mind and Habit of Relationship to drive results from your nonurgent, yet important leadership agenda.

### Frame Your Issues Clearly

You must learn to frame your agenda. Strategically framing issues — setting context, time frame, scope and viewpoint — is work that is among the cornerstones of leadership. Work with your best thinkers and your inner circle to get this done — framing work is inherently exponential. How you frame guides what models you choose, what assumptions you maintain, what interrelationships you pursue, and so forth. When you frame your agenda, think of these things:

- How narrowly or broadly am I thinking about my challenges?
- Would it be helpful to frame the key issues at several different levels?
- What is my time frame for this issue? Why?
- Where does this issue fall in terms of importance and priority?
- What mental models and assumptions do I have that could affect how I frame this issue?
- What tools might I use to frame this issue? What are the limits of these tools?

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### Habit of Focus

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- What is known and not known about this issue?

Of course, beyond framing specific issues, you need to have a clear sense of what your overall leadership challenge looks like. Only once you have a sense of the whole can you develop a reasoned response to any particular issue. ■

### The Inner-Circle Life Cycle

Let's explore how inner-circle relationships progress through the stages of leadership: from Early Leadership (a first assignment as the head of a unit), to the stage of Key Leader, and finally, to achieving Senior Leadership at the top of an organization.

Both the issues of leadership and the ways in which thinking partnerships develop change profoundly over the life cycle. Thus, how to best establish, nurture and grow the leadership circle relationships that will be essential to your success is a crucial topic to address.

#### *Building Lifelong Leadership Circles*

Your advisory networks and teams are very powerful leadership resources, precisely because they are full and fully developed relationships. Most leaders, even young ones, have some form of advisory network, usually informal — a friend you can call for advice, or a group of people with whom you trade favors.

As you progress as a leader, however, you become increasingly empowered to create, staff and use an ever-growing advisory network. You should populate it with people you really click with — people of the highest caliber, people with whom you are completely committed to working. Your advisory network is built around a single visionary person: you.

As such, its composition and use will necessarily change as your career progresses. You need to understand what you already have in place, and how those people currently serve or fail to serve you. Understanding what makes you powerful in exponential inquiry will allow you to build this team to support your strengths.

#### *Start Right Now*

How should you begin? Start by asking yourself these key questions:

- What kinds of contacts and network have I built, and how and why do I use them?
- Are there teachers, mentors, friends and activities that have been particularly important in my development at some stage in my life?
- How do I include my spouse or significant other, family members, and personal friends in my current inner circle?

- When have I had a conversation or ongoing dialogue in which I significantly changed my understanding or learned something I did not expect? What were the conditions and nature of the relationship that led to the insight?

- Are there critical areas of inquiry for me now where I find I have no thinking partner, or where the thinking partners I do have are lacking in the expertise, perspective, or structural trust I need?

#### *The Stages of Leadership*

While there are no hard and fast demarcations in the stages of leadership, three broad distinctions are useful: Early Leader, Key Leader, and Senior Leader. Level of responsibility for the business is a good way to think about the leadership stage. In smaller businesses, Key and Senior Leaders routinely face decisions across many functional areas that have direct impact on the business. In large organizations, the Early Leader might manage 20 to 50 people, with a significant role to play in the organization and real decision authority that impacts results. The Key Leader typically leads a strategic business unit or a division. Some large global corporations make this distinction when they think about their “top 200” leaders. Senior Leaders occupy the very top levels of the organization. ■

### Early Leaders

Most individuals at the Early Leader level are immersed in mastering the basics of their job responsibilities, in understanding the dynamics of their organizations, and in demonstrating the capability to lead groups to deliver business results. They must first learn to develop a few key advisory relationships to begin to get the third opinion regularly. Second, they must lay the groundwork for their long-term leadership circles.

#### *Habit of Mind for Early Leaders*

In order to develop the Habit of Mind, Early Leaders must work to improve their exponential thinking, to look for hidden assumptions, attempt to disprove hypotheses, actively seek out the data points that don't fit, and analyze trade-off and risk. They must ask themselves these questions:

- Are there things I see as clear-cut issues that someone four levels above might see from many perspectives and not as being so clear-cut? Do any of these issues directly affect my excelling at work today?
- Are there issues or challenges that seem persistent or recurrent despite my best efforts to work on them? What are the underlying dynamics that seem to keep me from making progress on these issues?
- Are there things that I know that top management doesn't know that, if they did, would lead them to make

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### Early Leaders

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very different decisions?

- Are there people I am working with who might have a different point of view about the world, based on a different background and understanding of the world?

- How much flexibility do I have to structure my time? Am I using my time as effectively as possible?

- Have I been caught unaware by a business problem? What can I do differently to better prepare myself for such things in the future?

- Are there people who think about things and frame questions in ways that are better than I can? Do I admire these people? What makes them able to do that?

These skills are difficult to develop alone, which unmask a need for thinking partners to help you with your exponential thinking. It is also critical to listen to these people. Use the answers to these questions to help you integrate multiple perspectives and develop new skills and knowledge. To improve your listening skills (and, consequently, your exponential thinking), you must create opportunities to remind yourself to listen for the unexpected idea, the different perspective, and the unspoken truth.

#### *Habit of Relationship for Early Leaders*

Early Leaders have the potential to cultivate a wide network of contacts, both inside and outside the organization. Broadening one's spectrum of networks to include thinking and sharing perspectives has been key for helping some Early Leaders improve their networking.

Early Leaders broaden their base of relationships first by determining who in their day-to-day interactions might be interesting to get to know better over time — people with new or different perspectives on common issues. Early Leaders try to imagine how operations might be different if these people were not around, or, conversely, what they would do with and for these people if they were going to be in the leader's inner circle for the long haul. The leader must also be cognizant of how effective he or she is at cultivating and maintaining relevant contact with these and other colleagues with whom he or she is not involved on daily issues.

First, however, the Early Leader must learn how to develop contacts outside his or her organization. An external network can be built from contacts made through trade associations or trade shows, through alliances with other organizations, through local colleges or business schools, alumni networks, chambers of commerce, nonprofit activities, and many more.

#### *Habit of Focus for Early Leaders*

One critical objective at the beginning of building and

using your advisory network is learning how to get results from insight. Knowing what to do with what you learn is the difference between thinking in the abstract and truly powering up your leadership capacity. Armed with new insight, you must move forward and find an outlet to use that insight, understanding the full range of stakeholders for your ideas and calibrating your ideas with the organization's goals to make the biggest impact possible. Most importantly, you must find ways to ensure you are able to see your new ideas through to a result.

Keep focused on nonurgent issues. Work with a special adviser on focusing your insights to gain results — this is perhaps the best point of concentration for an early-stage advisory relationship. Having this partner will help you move from being someone who comes up with many good ideas that aren't acted upon, to someone who uses innovation to get great results. This is often a determining factor in how quickly you move from Early Leader to Key Leader. ■

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### Key Leaders

It's never too early or too late to start reaching for the third opinion. The critical juncture for outside insight and inner-circle thinking partners typically comes as leaders hit their stride as Key Leaders.

#### *Habit of Mind for Key Leaders*

Having developed the basic capabilities of Early Leadership, Key Leaders must turn their full attention to developing their complete Habit of Mind. By reaching the Key Leader level, it is certain that you have developed unique patterns of success by drawing on your curiosity, your self-awareness, and your awareness of others, different perspectives, and exponential thinking.

To further your Habit of Mind, consider these key issues:

- How your active curiosity manifests itself in day-to-day work.
- How well you understand and value the abilities of others.
- Whether you avoid diving into issues where there are likely to be no clear-cut answers, and how you prefer to tackle those issues (alone or with others).
- How you mitigate bias in your information sources.
- How you determine what best supports your ability to judge yourself from all angles, rather than from a single, self-interested lens.

#### *Habit of Relationship for Key Leaders*

The first signs of changing relationships and trust appear when one moves from Early Leader to Key Leader. Your primary inner-circle action team might no

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### Key Leaders

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longer be the right group to handle inquiry-related issues. Certain things might be difficult to discuss with this group, for a variety of reasons. You need to populate your inner circle (internal and external) with people you value for their expertise, exponential thinking capacity, shared personal chemistry, degree of structural trust, relevance to nonurgent agenda items, and reputation/relationship to the organization.

To whom can you turn with unspoken concerns about an issue or decision? With whom would you most want/need to think before making critical decisions? Who sees the problems in a similar fashion as you? Who sees things differently, challenging your blind spots most effectively?

### Habit of Focus for Key Leaders

How you spend your unscheduled time is a most significant factor in what kinds of results you and your teams will achieve, and what your career trajectory will be. You must prioritize your needs; increase and improve your external relationships, contacts and resources so that you can turn to them with confidence; and develop your inner circle, working with exponential thinking partners. Get informed perspectives, challenge your choices, refine your inner circle, and create your third opinion team — these are the things leaders do to challenge themselves, to challenge their perceptions, and to find new ways of solving problems.

Some other things to consider when developing your Habit of Focus include the following:

- Continue to ensure that your inquiry shapes successful action.
- Manage the inflow of advice, counsel and information you receive. You don't have to take everything that is offered.
- Structure your advisory network to meet your needs and your thinking style.
- Allocate the time you need to focus on your nonurgent important agenda.
- Expand the impact of your advisory network to your organization. ■

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## Senior Leaders

The move to Senior Leader means a whole new level of leadership challenges. You'll need greater vision, broader focus, and longer time frames. Your actions, and the values embedded in those actions, will be mirrored in your organization. Every move you make will be placed under a microscope and scrutinized for intent and direction.

Many leaders can thank their advisory network for

helping them get from Key Leader level to Senior Leader level. At the Senior Leader level, bonds and loyalty on both sides run deep. As the nature of responsibility and power changes at the Senior Leader level, your advisory network must likewise grow with the challenges you now face.

### Deepening Your Habit of Mind

Now that you've arrived at the Senior Leader level, consider your inner circle. Is it sufficiently diverse to help you with a wide range of issues? Do the people in your inner circle help you to broaden your perspective and options, helping you to think in new ways?

Turn the camera on yourself now. As you become more successful and powerful, are you honest enough to be able to explore uncomfortable truths with your thinking partners? Relationships begun in expertise, inquiry and trust must develop as you develop, as your partners develop, and as you all gain in experience and skill.

### Broadening Your Habit of Relationship

As a Senior Leader, you must spread your net of key relationships wider than you did (or were able to) as a Key or Early Leader. You must determine what must be done to get the top people inside and outside your organization to work with you. This is where your personality and leadership capital — your reputation capital — might come in handy, to attract the best and brightest to you, and to consider you as a thinking partner.

One way to attract them is to help them achieve their goals. As a Senior Leader, you are in a unique position to make your thinking partners a powerful force in your organization. Once you have proven to be successful in such an endeavor, other key thinkers will likely follow, including some you might not have been able to access before. Now that you're at the Senior level, it's a whole new game.

### Challenging Your Habit of Focus

Even as a Senior Leader, you must focus effort on your own growth, as well as that of your company and advisers. You must regularly push inquiry to its limits and encourage others to do so as well. You must determine whether the challenges of Senior Leadership cause you to reframe or refocus the boundaries of your inquiry. This must happen regularly — otherwise, you get mired in old patterns and old thinking.

You must also focus some time on considering your legacy — what you will leave behind in your organization when you retire or otherwise move on. Have you concentrated on how to best spur innovative ideas in the lower ranks? Have you groomed anyone in the Early Leader ranks to move up to Key Leader, or from Key Leader to Senior Leader? Let your legacy be one of intelligence, development, thought and results. ■