

The Network Leader

Edward Mouriño-Ruiz, PhD, is a U.S. Air Force veteran and a seasoned human resources development professional. He has written numerous articles on a variety of subjects and recently published *The Perfect Human Capital Storm: Challenges and Opportunities in the 21st Century*.

In a recent article he penned for the Association of Talent Development (ATD), he cites several studies demonstrating that the main reasons employees leave organizations are poor management and lack of leadership. A 2013 white paper from the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), "The Challenges Leaders Face Around the World," notes that 56% of organizations indicate a lack of leadership would impede organizational performance, and 31% predict that a leadership shortage would impact organizations over the next few years. This same white paper also reports that 80% of executives note the ability to develop leaders as one of the most important factors to impact an organization's competitive advantage.

Conversely, the importance employees place on leadership is significantly different than their organizations and this disconnect is not new. In the 2005 ASAE article, "The 7 Hidden Reasons Employees Leave," Leigh Branham reported that 89% of managers believe that employees leave organizations for more money, but only 12% of employees agree with this analysis. A 2013 Gallup study reports that 80% of managers believe employees are just glad to have a job, while only 53% of employees feel this way.

Mouriño-Ruiz believes the good news is that this disconnect provides organizations an opportunity to ensure proper development for their leadership ranks. He believes this is particularly imperative with an increasingly diverse workforce, and as Baby Boomers prepare to move on to retirement or another phase of their work lives.

Current leadership development isn't working—only 32% of organizations are satisfied with their senior leadership team, remarks the 2013 *Harvard Business Review* article "How Google Sold Its Engineers on Management," while leaders face increasing demands to deliver faster results and improve their interactions with others. Mouriño-Ruiz thinks we may be at a tipping point where organizational leaders must transition from transactional and transformational models where these changing and challenging times are moving the needle to an even newer model: the network leader.

While conducting hundreds of leadership workshops over the last 30 years, Mouriño-Ruiz has asked participants to describe the characteristics of effective leaders. The traits that are continuously mentioned and the ones that he suggests are integral to the network leader include communication, trust, empathy, inclusiveness, vulnerability, generosity, humility, balance, and patience.