

## Keynote speech: Today's and Tomorrow's Leaders

Penny de Valk, CEO, Institute for Leadership and Management

Penny's focus was on leadership and management. She spoke about the accelerating opportunities for leaders within the context of:

- Global shifts – more for less
- Quality versus consumerism – rising expectations
- Changing demographics – extraordinary demands

Transforming organisations creates huge pressure, so new ways of operating are required.

Penny spoke of a paradigm shift in changing world view. New times demand new perspectives. The established 'rules of the day' no longer fit and can even block vision for the future. She promoted a shift from planning/organising/controlling to a different leadership role for which there is no recipe, as yet.

She cited the key skills as:

- Facilitating groups of people to find new insights
- Decisiveness
- Fast analysis: balancing pace with considered solutions – live with a level of ambiguity for a bit longer, so new answers can form
- Good leaders need to be authentic and enabling and able to cope with ambiguity. People want to be led by real people.

She suggested ways to build leadership skills through a triangle of knowing/doing/being:

- Knowing - What do I know? What more do I need to understand?
- Doing - How effective am I? Think about turning vision into action and building a community that not only wants but also can do!
- Being – Who am I? What does smart really mean?

Key skills for leadership development are:

- Synergy [making the whole greater than the sum of its parts]
- Ability to help others clarify their roles, positions, avoiding "either/or" and going with both/and (thus making the answer bigger)

Core question to ask oneself:

- How aware am I of the impact I have on others? Not just about how self aware one is, but being able to see ourselves as others see us is crucial.
- Being a better human being makes a better leader!
- Learn to live outside what's comfortable
- Personal resilience is helpful
- Pacing oneself important, too.

She is guided by her compass: go with the head and the heart and be the best that you can be:

- Moral compass – principles to guide our relationships, i.e.the truth
- Existential compass – what's it all about?
- Relational – where and how will I make a difference? And investing in enduring relationships

Penny drew on a metaphor to explain the need of the leader to bridge the gap between past and future. Society is no longer harmonious, structured and immediately meaningful, like classical music simply requiring a conductor. Leading into the future is more like jazz - liberating, sophisticated, self managing. So being a leader of people into the future is more chaotic and requires a different leadership style – you need to lead at the edge of our capability.

Penny finished with a quote from a speech Nelson Mandela made in 1994: "...deepest fear is not to be inadequate but to be adequate beyond measure ... who am I to be gorgeous and talented? Who are you not to be?"