

## **An Interim Scorecard for Blueprint2020's Interim Report**

*“The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.” Alvin Toffler*

And so it is with the federal public sector's transformational agenda including Blueprint2020, the visioning exercise for the public service. Much work has already been done on Blueprint2020 in terms of consultations at staff levels across the federal government, and an interim report was produced in the fall of 2013 with a final report due in the May timeframe. Departments have tried to engage staff in articulating a vision and committing to the change this will entail. Horizontal efforts have been made such as in the National Managers Community, and many action plans have been developed as a result. This is all great isn't it? Yes. The question is, is it enough? Let's look at some key areas which will contribute to success or failure.

I was fortunate enough to attend the second annual Leadership Summit on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, organized by Canadian Government Executive. It was a very practical and insightful event with great speakers and active participants. A keynote speaker was Dr. David Ulrich, a university professor from the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. In fact, Dr. Ulrich is known throughout the world for his work in the areas of leadership and organizational change among others. He studies how organizations build capabilities of leadership, speed, learning, accountability, and talent through leveraging human resources. He has published over 200 articles and book chapters and over 25 books, including the *Leadership Code* for which he is possibly most well respected as it has become a standard for leadership best practice. He is Listed in Thinkers 50 as a management thought leader and he's listed in Forbes as one of the “world's top five” business coaches. Suffice it to say it was quite a coup for CGE to be able to get him for this event.

For all the accolades and success he's had Dr. Ulrich is very approachable and shares complex ideas in straightforward and accessible ways. During his presentation he shared some key thoughts about the Blueprint2020 initiative based on his knowledge, experience and insights. He talked about four key agendas that need to be done well for change, especially significant organizational change, to be successful: the **intellectual** agenda, the **behavioural** agenda, the **process** agenda, and the **leadership** agenda.

He likened the results of the interim Blueprint2020 report to the intellectual agenda and he said that it is great in that regard. He said the report articulates a strong intellectual agenda for the public service.

A behavioural agenda involves leaders teaching the correct or new principles and then letting staff get on with them. Too many leaders and managers do not get out of the way. He likened this to the character of Col. Potter on the old TV series MASH. Col Potter knew that his people could do their job and got out of their way in doing it. When employees determine what they will personally do to make the culture real to them, it is less an abstraction and more a reality. A behavioural agenda is built in a bottom-up fashion. Dr Ulrich said that the development of the actions plans sounds like it is moving in this direction.

He said that culture change needs to show up in a host of management practices and processes, this is the process agenda. It has to be woven into the fabric of how work is done by leaders, by managers and by staff, how decisions are made, how staff are treated, how hiring is done, how plans are formed, how information is shared, etc. If we keep doing the same things and in the same way, then there is no change. A significant change initiative, like the Blueprint202 requires a concomitant action plan for change in management practice and processes.

The last agenda was the leadership agenda, and he said quite simply that it needs to be modelled. It is not good enough to have action plans for staff, leaders should develop their own action plans and follow through on them. He mentioned Jack Welch and that he demanded that his senior management team start to practice collaborative management. Now that's an example of taking ownership for making change happen at the top. He went on to share the key elements of the The Leadership Code, a well accepted model for high-performing leader, with those in the session.

What was interesting and frankly, somewhat disappointing, was that Louise Levonian was not in the room when he spoke. She is the chair of the Public Service Engagement Subcommittee on Blueprint2020 and she participated in a panel discussion preceding Dr Ulrich's keynote. Unfortunately she was not in the room to hear his insight and assessment. Perhaps she is already aware of his insights but there was no overt indication of this. I say 'unfortunately' because this seemed to reflect a disconnect. If the public service is really going to be successful at instituting and sustaining the kind of culture change implied and suggested by Blueprint2020, then the change leaders must learn how to navigate the murky waters of culture change.

So I will ask you to judge. Based on your experience with Blueprint2020, how would you score the Blueprint2020 thus far, using Dr Ulrich's four critical areas for success. What should the final report say in May that the interim report does not address now?

<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Score</b>
Intellectual Agenda	
Behavioural Agenda	
Process Agenda	
Leadership Agenda	