

LEADERSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY: WHERE IS IT LEADING US?

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ABSTRACT

The high profile of leadership studies throughout the 20th century has led to a vast and diverse global literature on the topic. Although leadership is frequently equated with power, influence and status, acts of leadership can be observed right across organisational structures. Flatter organisations, semi/autonomous teams and knowledge-based workers challenge the 'traditional' view of hierarchical leaders possessing formal authority. Furthermore, the very public collapse of several large Australian organisations throughout 2001 led critics to question the leadership ability of their CEOs and whether or not a different type of leadership may have led to more productive and effective organisational outcomes. At the beginning of the 21st century, it seems the time is right to question the traditional models of leadership and ask for alternate approaches. This paper outlines the themes covered by the papers in this special issue volume. The first paper takes an international overview of leadership, the next two investigate leadership competencies, followed by two papers focusing on different approaches to leadership analysis. The final three papers examine leadership in the context of 21st century organizations focusing on: post industrial organizational realities, leadership and knowledge management, and leadership and workplace trust.