



# Leadership beyond Command & Control

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It is sometimes said that it is unfair to dinosaurs to use their species to illustrate the essence of being outmoded. After all, they not only survived, but dominated this planet, far longer than most species alive today have been around, including humankind.

What is undeniable, however, is that no matter how long an approach has been working, where circumstances have changed substantially, you must adapt accordingly or face less than optimal consequences.

Command and control leadership has been around a long time, and wherever there is a plan the development and execution of which can be most effectively achieved by entrusting it to one person to determine, it may still be a useful approach to take. For example, a platoon captain leading an ambush or an orchestral conductor leading a group of inexperienced musicians may well need to order their charges to do exactly as they are told.

But even in military operations, whenever the variables become more unpredictable, or the skill-sets involved (from interpreting local dialects to high-tech surveillance) grow in complexity, leaders have to rely on the ideas of their team members and other support outside their own team to shape and revise what is to be done as a mission unfolds.

It cannot be down to impressing their subordinates to do what they have been told in every detail, but instead, successful leadership requires collaborative relationship to be built up, so that plans can be constructively challenged and continuously adapted in the light of emerging details, assessed by the team members' diverse expertise. And conductors who ignore what seasoned musicians or sound engineers may advise them risk diminishing the chance of having a most outstanding performance recorded for posterity.

In the field of civil service and public sector management generally, leadership style suited to command and control is no longer appropriate to our age of complexity and multiple interactions.

Taking politicians' sweeping demands for grand initiatives and ordering these to be implemented with an imperious command that everything must be done in accordance with the preset blueprint is a ready recipe for disaster.

Instead of threatening people with Ferguson-type hair-dryer castigation should they fail to comply with detailed instructions, collaborative leaders should be encouraging all they work with to give their views and ongoing feedback, and to take their own initiative to adapting initial plans to changing conditions.

Collaborative leadership represents a seismic shift from the old-style top-down syndrome. While there's much talk these days about the need for those in leadership positions to adopt a more inclusive and collaborative approach, a real change requires considerable rethinking about the art of motivation and systematic adoption of new practices to make it happen.

The *Succeeding through Collaborative Leadership* programme I have designed for the Civil Service College addresses this challenge by providing deliberative opportunities to learn about:

- Key measures of collaborative success
- Examples of successful collaborative working
- Politicians as partners
- Networking with advisors & advocates
- Building collaborative teams
- Working across policy divides
- Promoting the collaborative ethos with diverse stakeholders
- Leadership for state-citizens collaboration

This half-day programme will benefit: (1) anyone who has to bring together a diverse group of team members and key external players to achieve demanding results; (2) officials tasked with leading cross-cutting projects that will require the collaborative input from colleagues across Whitehall and stakeholders outside government; and (3) managers who need to demonstrate high level aptitudes in promoting consensus and cooperation when working with multi-sector partners.

For more details [Click Here](#)

Dr. Henry Tam is Director of the Forum for Youth Participation & Democracy (University of Cambridge). He was a senior civil servant who held major cross-cutting roles such as the Home Office Director for the East of England, and the Government's Head of Civil Renewal, responsible for leading on behalf of 12 Whitehall departments the 'Together We Can' programme, which was showcased at the 2008 international meeting of the Global Network of Government Innovators (hosted by Harvard University, USA). His wide range of political writings include the global history 'Against Power Inequalities'; the satirical novel 'Whitehall through the Looking Glass'; and 'Communitarianism: a new agenda for politics and citizenship' (nominated by New York University Press for the 2000 Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order).