



From the right tools to the right stance

Towards 3rd generation Leadership training

Interview with Daniel Eppling, September 2011



For years, Krauthammer's quest was to provide pragmatic tools which could be accessed easily by leaders who weren't necessarily looking to get caught up in long-winded theories in order to find vehicles they could apply directly to their daily work...

That was the "value proposition" Krauthammer started out with, an interface between the scientific and business worlds. However, this stance, with its emphasis on efficiency and operations, has always come with a caveat: **technique is nothing without attitude**. How can this paradigm be put into today's context and given new meaning?

[Daniel Eppling](#), Group Managing Partner with responsibility for Krauthammer's Faculties (innovation), tells us how.

[Carole Pailhé](#): Daniel, writing recently, you mention concepts such as 1st, 2nd and 3rd generation training. Can you explain?

Daniel Eppling: Yes, and first let's return to the context of 1970s leadership training. The approach at the time had emerged from the so-called "soft sciences" and only dealt with concepts. Back then, you could deliver a theoretical framework and dispense with the "how to" side of things. Consequently, 1st generation training programmes focused on know-how.

2nd generation training programmes went from know-how to show-how (self management skills). Adding action to thought was the initial thrust of Krauthammer programmes. The intention was to make up for what was sadly lacking in the training market at the time: answering the question 'how?'.

To achieve this, we first had to isolate the 'what?'. In what critical situations is it vital for leaders to set a good example? From a certain point of view, the life of a leader boils down to a series of encounters and decisions. Consequently, we can break down the complexity of leadership into identified, specific situations and give each situation an optimised modus operandi. This resulted in the creation of what has become one of Krauthammer's hallmarks: its memo cards.

These memo cards are a practical, simple and stripped-back way of making good practices accessible to as many people as possible, with the stated objective of obtaining an immediate, tangible and observable effect. **This has always come with a caveat, because technique is nothing without attitude (in the same way as attitude is nothing without technique)**. Memo cards are nothing without self-examination, which is something we also focus on and stress the need for during our training programmes.

[Carole Pailhé](#): Why the need for this caveat?

Daniel Eppling: Believing that everything rests on one tool or recipe would be a mistake. When a training programme boils down to a quest for the easily accessible, we risk exaggerations and deviations. In fact, this is the kind of over-simplification and reductionism fought against by Edgar Morin, the undisputed master of so-called complex thought. And it can lead to blind thought. You cannot reduce leadership entirely to simple, immutable laws. You cannot permanently break it down into its constituent parts. You have to add more horizontal and holistic thinking.

"Technique is nothing without attitude and attitude is nothing without technique. We want to intensify the synthesis between know-how, show-how and be-how."

You should know that we're not looking for the kind of reductionism which seems to disregard the fabric of complexity. Neither do we seek the kind of exaggerated holism which ends up failing to give people material substance or pragmatic bearings. We want neither an overflowing toolkit, nor an abstract void.

This brings to mind something Pascal concluded: "I hold it impossible to know the parts without knowing the whole, and to know the whole without knowing the parts in detail". We call for a constant navigation between two poles. Neither can do without other; it is this very symbiosis which reveals their power.

[Carole Pailhé](#): How is this synthesis expressed in practical terms, particularly at Krauthammer?

Daniel Eppling: We want to qualify Krauthammer's original paradigm - one oriented towards 'response/action' and add another paradigm to it, oriented towards 'questioning/emergence'.

The two paradigms cannot be separated. The missing part of one is hidden in the other, and vice versa. Complex thought theory, developed by Edgar Morin, puts it like this: you have to "be able to single out without separating, link without reducing (...). Acceptance of complexity means accepting a contradiction that you cannot bury in a euphoric vision of the world".

This approach leads us to reconsider the how (the tool or solution) to deal with the what (the situation) by prioritising the who (the individual/leader). Otherwise put, if the 1st generation of training programmes focused on "know-how" and the 2nd generation on "show-how" (self-management skills), then the 3rd generation combines the first two to create "be-how" (life skills).

This change is rather significant, since it pre-supposes new and fundamental dimensions in training and coaching:

- clearing a previously fully occupied space - creating the void.
- raising awareness of the notions of synchronicity (being alert to meaningful coincidences) and serendipity (being open to the unexpected)
- developing self-learning ability through experiential workshops using symbolism and metaphor.

This means a shift for 3rd generation training courses - towards other landscapes and learning methods. It involves moving from an intellectual stance concerning a situation (analysis) to a stance of experience (feeling). This is necessary if we are to shake up sometimes fossilised management clichés. A spark is created by the friction of the flint, the close contact with experience. This

Analysis & Research
Management
Sales
Personal development
We recommend

Core statement

As a coaching, consulting and training company, we respond to client needs worldwide where strategic changes or operational improvements demand behaviour change at individual, team and corporate levels.

The 'leadership' programme I just followed helps me in concrete implementation, providing simple and practical tools I can use daily. Well done, and thanks!

*Pierre-Yves Legris, CEO,
Legris Industries, France*

Article in the spotlight



Informal learning in organisations

Organisations have long understood the importance of their formal learning initiatives and architecture. Yet informal learning - free knowledge exchange between employees - is as vital and in serious need of help.

Subscribe to newsletter

Inspiration newsletter offers quarterly insights on behaviour change

Subscribe

friction stimulates surprise, enables lateral movement, helping you to see yourself in a different way and so stimulate a new quest.

Ultimately, this new approach demands that we release our grip on two panaceas: firstly, tools, and secondly, immediate action. Firstly, wrenching ourselves away from the compulsive hunt for the One Reassuring Tool, the frantic race for additional recipes - because we'll always miss something. Secondly, instead of obeying the relentless imperative for immediate action, we have to accept the notion of playing with the provisory, the incomplete. To contain the undetermined for long enough to allow it to take shape. Rather than dreading difficulties, we can pacify them, seeing them as doorways to more distant, unknown territories.

To conclude, a machine is said to be "trivial"¹ when the same input always generates the same output. Its behaviour is absolutely predictable. A human being is not a trivial machine! This is why leaders, more than ever, need to engage and inspire their teams². And it is why a leader's self-development needs to be accompanied in a new way.

Carole Pailhé: [What would you recommend for our readers who want to explore this approach further?](#)

Daniel Epling: Simply to [contact us](#) immediately if you are inspired by the subject, because we can promise you a fascinating conversation! I would also point you in the direction of:

- Edgar Morin, who I have mentioned. His book "Introduction to Complex Thought" is a real source of inspiration to stop you falling into exaggerated reductionism
- Margaret Wheatley who, in her book "Leadership & the New Science", shows the limitations of Newtonian organisations in the age of quantum physics

¹ [Concept originally proposed by Heinz von Foerster](#)

² See our article "[How to maintain engagement and lucidity in the storm](#)", Inspiration, April 2010.



Client case



From pumps to people in a unified culture

ERIKS Germany approached Krauthammer with a

request to help create a sense of unity. ERIKS owned 12 companies of between 25 and 250 staff, mainly former family-run businesses in Germany...

Research



Capturing organisational identity

Who are we? Are we the same people we were yesterday? How different are we from others? Questions surrounding an organisation's identity become very relevant in turbulent times.

Video



Self management & personal organisation (VIDEO)

Test yourself

Identity: what kind of leader are you?

Identity refers to who the leader fundamentally is. Key question is to what extent a leader's identity allows her/him to behave differently in different contexts.

Our services

Assessment
Coaching
Consulting
Training
Practices
All open trainings

Articles & Research

Management articles
Sales articles
Personal development articles
Research reports

