Here's the big idea. Leadership in the networked world is the same as it was in the time of Genghis Khan. The process - which we call the 4 E's of Envision, Enable, Empower and Energize - is the same. The principles are the same.

Leaders . are always looking for specific things to do "next Monday", to make things happen. Leadership depends on having a unique vision, making strategic choices, finding the right tools & people to do the job, and designing and enabling an organization to get it done.

Leadership is about understanding people, and about getting people pointing and acting in the same direction. The unique role of a leader is then to provide the energy and commitment to see this job through, and ensuring execution is perfect. Leadership is about listening, and making a real "connect" with others. It is a process.

We call this process the **4 E's of Envision, Enable, Empower & Energize**. The framework has been developed by studying historical Leaders (live ones are notoriously difficult to summarize in a complete fashion, as things change so quickly), the current literature, and from personal experience of leading multinational & multicultural organizations across the world.

The sidebar on "Historical Examples" summarizes how the first 4 E's apply to two very different Leaders – Mohandas Gandhi and Genghis Khan.

The 4 E's framework applies equally to Leadership in different cultural backgrounds – important to Leader's of today's' multicultural Enterprises. But before examining the 4 E's in detail, there is a simple set of fundamental truths about all Leaders to review.

- **Leaders always create (and need) change**
- **Leaders always create (and need) followers**
- **Leaders have a rock-solid value system, which is congruent with their followers**.

Leaders and Change

Without a need for change, the concept of Leadership is meaningless. **Leadership is not an abstract, Platonic concept - it is a practical activity, with a specific goal in mind**. The situation in India pre-independence almost demanded that someone (like Gandhi) arose to lead and organize the cause. In the 4 E's framework, Change is central to the strategic choices made at the Envisioning stage.

Leaders and Followers

Leaders are quintessential change agents, but they can't do it alone – they still need the help of others to get things going. They find ways to create groups of followers, so they can together change things. We are not talking of manipulation or of mischief when we write "**Leaders create followers**". We mean that the job of a Leader is to encourage people to get things done. There is symmetry and symbiosis between Leaders and followers. Both need each other.

Without followers, there are no Leaders. In this sense, **Leadership varies by situation**, as a good Leader in one circumstance may not be successful in another. A classic example of Leadership varying by situation is Winston Churchill, who succeeded in wartime and then failed in peacetime by loosing a General Election. He was unable to reflect people's post-war needs.

By contrast, Charles De Gaulle was a strong wartime Leader, who also managed to reflect the needs of the populace in peacetime. He still held his own views on the future of France – so succeeding as a Leader in both situations. Followers must follow willingly. Coercion should certainly not be in the Leader's tool kit. Trust between Leader and Follower is essential to this willingness. Even Genghis enjoyed fierce loyalty from his troops – a loyalty he returned in full.

Our definition is built on the notion that Leaders can only really get other people to do things that are latent within them. To note Genghis again, the Mongol tribes wanted to stop their internecine, tribal genocide – but needed him to show the way.

Finally, with this **process orientation to Leadership**, we believe everyone can train, develop and enhance their Leadership skills. This is true regardless of the size or complexity of the Enterprise. And, because everyone can train, the results can be measured. You can't have Leader's without followers, and you can't have followers without Leaders. **Paradoxically, therefore, the Leader is also a follower**, in the sense of reflecting the wishes of others. Leaders and followers are thus fully interdependent.

Leaders & Values congruence

The Leadership job starts with a thorough **understanding of the follower's needs, aspirations and concerns**, which needs excellent listening and facilitation skills. Most importantly, it starts with a thorough understanding of the value systems of all constituents. The Leader's value system must be congruent with that of the followers if the relationship is to prosper.

Leaders must **first understand and then communicate their own value systems** if they are to be trusted and followed. Leadership comes from within us, in the sense that deeply held values and principles provide the road map for the way we lead, and the way other people respond. It is always the Leader's personal value system that sustains them in their quest, whether they are a person of impeccable moral fiber, or quite disreputable. On the negative side, without a clear sense of his or her own personal values, the Leader-to-be can get hopelessly lost, falling foul of inconsistency and insincerity as he struggles to handle the constituents.

From the perspective of the total organization, the creation and Leadership of a value system for the Enterprise, which is in total synchronization with the values of its constituents, will be very powerful indeed. This needs a sense of balance in dealing with multiple constituencies and interest groups, whilst also achieving the Enterprise goals. Constituencies include employees, shareholders, customers and members of local communities. Often the very best (and longest lived) business Enterprises takes specific note of all their constituencies in their mission and strategies. It is with this in mind that we include values and culture in the Envisioning step of the 4 E's.

Ideas and Values

Let us now connect these thoughts on Leadership into the world of ideas. First, what is an "idea", and what is a "value", and what is the connection?

Idea: a thought to be presented as a suggestion, a thought about or mental picture of something such as a future or possible event, a realization of a possible way of doing something or of something to be done.

In today's parlance, an idea tends to be thought of as an innovation, That is, an idea that can be practically executed and which creates value. So, we can all have ideas, and they result in changes, to a greater or lesser extent. They can be incremental, substantial or transformational innovations – all are needed in any Enterprise to keep it moving forward. Clayton Christensen (in the "Innovator's Dilemma") calls the latter innovations "disruptive" – technologies like the printed press, and the internal combustion engine, which changed everything [iii]. He also made the point that large Enterprises tend not to "disrupt".

Values: the accepted principles or standards of an individual or a group.

What is interesting is that ideas lead eventually to values, if they are big enough. As we moved from hunting to agriculture, one assumes someone had the basic idea that not killing people was "good". Later, the idea of the rule of law came along, and then liberal democracy. Both eventually became values in "civil society". The idea of "markets" surfaced, and the values of "capitalism" took hold. On the other hand, Marx thought of the idea of "communism", which lasted a while but never became an endearing value.

Values emerge over time, and get consensus over time. **Ideas can be born at "Internet speed", but values take time and energy to create** and to take hold in an Enterprise [iv]. Put another way, ideas are fast, and values are slow. Ideas sometimes lead to powerful values, but not always. So what is the relevance to Leadership, and to change?

It is ideas that motivate people, but values that bind them together. When a Leader communicates, he or she must be clear whether the subject is ideas or values. Now this may sound simplistic, but how many times do we hear politicians claiming an idea as some kind of deep, culturally significant value?

On the other hand, how often do business people refuse to discuss values, as something too intangible and emotional in a commercial context? If more business Leaders would discuss values, and their development, one wonders how many more enduring Companies there would be – a point especially true for the "New Economy" high speed Enterprises. Values are also deeply related to strong brand equities – a point to which we will return in another article. One aspect of a change Leader's job is thus to understand this difference in meaning and impact between ideas and values, and the difference in their speed.

Sources of ideas	Values: Example	Strength
Entertainment & fashion	Latest trends	Weak
Markets and business	Capitalism	
Politics and Law	Democracy	
Infrastructure	Education for all	
Religion and culture	Cultural loyalty	
Nature and biology	"Child in danger"	Strong

So, let us summarize to this point by offering our definition of Leadership.

"Leadership is the energetic process of getting other people fully and willingly committed to a new and sustainable course of action, to meet commonly agreed objectives whilst having commonly held values".

Now we will set out this process of Leadership in actionable steps.

The 4 E's

In each of the E's (Envision, Enable. Empower and Energize) we are working with two axes. At one side, we are working with **Operational** parameters – the strategies, the tools, the measurements. At the other side, we are dealing with **Organizational** and people issues. We will symbolize this as a growing grid.

Step 1: Envision

Leadership starts with having a vision, then developing a plan to achieve it. It is based both on data assessment and intuition, hope and fear. It is a noble challenge. A vision of the future is the key to getting started as a Leader. Without one, go back to square one.

Envisioning starts with having a clear view of the external world. It drives the formation of the mission of the Enterprise, and builds clear, mutual goals. In day-to-day work, it is helpful to distinguish between verbal objectives (the mission), and numerical objectives (the goals).

A vision that is likely to come true has to take account of the culture of the Enterprise. For example, a slow moving bureaucracy is not likely to succeed as a "New Economy" Enterprise without significant cultural change. The Leader then has a choice – mold the vision and strategy to the capabilities and values of the culture – or change the culture to achieve a different future for the Enterprise. A decision either direction will have enormous consequences for the change program undertaken.

A vision could be a grand view of a Country's future, or a major Corporation's – or it could be a picture of what one wants to achieve in the family, or amongst a group of friends. In all cases Leaders are seeking a vision of change that is needed.

It often seems that the word "vision" has fallen into disrepute – we all have drawers full of unexecuted visions. In our view, a vision is an operational strategy, reflecting choices of what to do and what not to do, with hard goals. It is not "fuzzy and warm". It is essential.

Step 2: Enable

The Envisioning step forces decisions on choices – strategies, in other words. **Leaders must then decide what methods or tools will be used to Enable the objectives**, and to encourage the right kind of action.

There are essentially two kinds of enabling mechanisms – both built on innovation. The first mechanisms (along what we defined as the "Operational" axis) include tools, technologies, and business methodologies. "A better mouse trap" is always a good enabling mechanism to bring about change. In every case, the tools and tactics used must meet the needs of the strategic choices defined earlier. On methodologies, in today's "New Economy" terms, this also would be time to review one's business model, to check its competitive advantage or pitfalls.

The second set of enabling mechanisms (on the "Organizational" axis) includes processes and structure. It also means ensuring the Enterprise has the right people and the right skill sets to get the job done. These all require building on the Enterprise's culture and values. This could mean the deliberate elimination of counterproductive values or structure - but there will always be a structure and a set of processes in place.

David Hanna, an ex-colleague who now works with the Covey Leadership Center, once wrote, "Every organization is perfectly designed to get the results that it gets" [v]. I prefer "**Every Enterprise is perfectly led to get the results that it gets**". Leadership is the key. Serendipity or chaos is not usually an enabler, except for the briefest moment.

Step 3: Empower

Given a clear vision, strategy and enabling tool kit, the third step of the Leadership process is empowering people to achieve the goals. There is a "deal" between the Leader and his or her followers. The followers and the Leader have a **contract**, for success and failure, reward and sanction, on both sides. Both are given mutual freedom, yet held mutually accountable. Both are thus empowered [vi].

We do not subscribe to a "free for all" empowerment. It is a deal:

"You deliver this, and I deliver that. You will get more space, the better you do. The more I meet your needs, the stronger Leadership position I will be in. Together we will therefore be better able to accelerate the changes we have agreed to make".
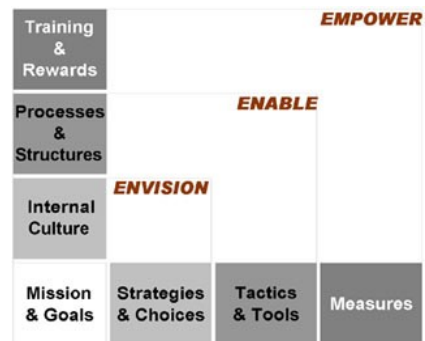
Said another way, effective empowerment provides the space to get the task completed, the space to innovate, **and the feedback mechanism to both improve results and to motivate** the organization.

Again, there are two sides to empowerment. On the "Organizational" axis, the team needs to be given the training to get the job done. This is self-evident. The empowerment must also bring rewards to all parties, and sanctions or challenges for improvement.

On the "Operational" axis, both Leaders and Followers need to be able to measure progress against the goals, in a transparent way, which also encourages dialog and continuous improvement.

Combining these thoughts, one of the fundamental, empowering (and energizing) roles of a Leader is to teach. This includes both practical work topics, and Leadership skills. On-going 360º feedback and measurement studies by Marshall Goldsmith [vii] and others show that Leadership skill can improve over time. The data also suggests that training in Leadership development can positively impact other aspects of on the job performance.

We view this as another expression of the point made earlier that the mission of the Enterprise must take into account its values and its culture. A Leader must therefore work hard to understand how national culture affects the way people react – all constituencies, but especially employees and customers. That being said, bending to the local culture without thought to the Enterprise's "culture in the making" will lead to inconsistency and chaos. As ever, the Leader's job is one of thoughtful balance. From personal experience, the most practical Leadership approach across a multi-cultural group is one of facilitation. After much personal trial and error, it seems the **best facilitation includes thoughts and approaches from both Western and Asian cultures**.

For example, "Westerners" tend to be very open with exposing their innermost ideas, and even their value systems – the cult of the individual, one supposes. On the other hand, "Asians" tend to be reticent in so doing – not wanting to disturb the group. In fact, depending on the situation, both actions can be helpful for a Leader facilitating a group.

| Empowerment via facilitation	Cultural basis
• **Start with (and stick to) the Vision**	• **Asia & The West**
• **Let go of your own power**	• **Asia**
• **Have patience**	• **Asia**
• **Listen for what is not said**	• **Asia**
• **Build Interdependence via process**	• **Asia**
• **Set out clear ground rules up front**	• **The West**
• **Expose your own value system, first**	• **The West**
• **Build an empowerment "contract"**	• **The West**
• **Get all the issues out**	• **The West**
• **Stick to the process over time**	• **Asia & The West**

Another example is that of listening. A "Westerner" tends to assume that what is being said is all that needs to be heard. On the other hand, "Asian" culture puts emphasis on the context with which things are being said – or, put another way, what is not being said. A good meeting facilitator will sense when things need to be drawn out of the group which are not immediately obvious, in order to move ahead. Leaders must do the same. The notion of facilitation is thus a classic one of blending the best of "East and West". Facilitation skill provides a wonderful Leadership tool kit to address cultural sensitivity.

Trust via empowerment

The overall impact of empowerment is to build trust. There are many ways to do this, all of which are as applicable to networks as in any other context. A word of warning – trust is not something a group can just agree to have. It is built over time [viii].

Step 4: Energize

So, the goal is clear, the plan is in place, and the troops are both motivated and armed. Still, there is an essential ingredient missing. The Leadership role demands the skills of energizing the organization to act.
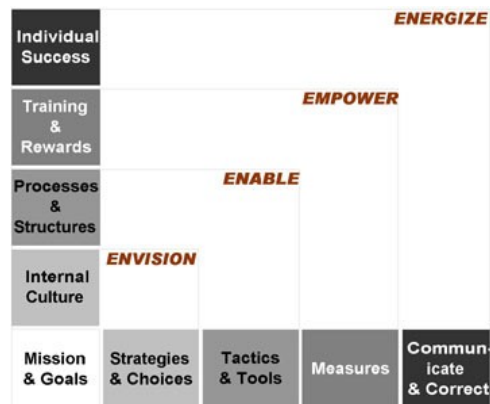
In fact , whilst we hope every member of a team "Energizes" others, one could argue that this Energizing step is a very personal one. By contrast the previous 3 steps usually involve shared actions by the entire team.

Looking at the 4 E's grid, on the "Organizational" axis we summarize the issue as "individual success". For the members of the team, probably the maximum energy will result from the combination of winning (in the marketplace) and achieving a sense of personal success and satisfaction. The **more energy the team generates, the more energy the Leader has** – in a virtuous circle of reinforcement.

On the other, "Operational" axis, we see that continuous communication and course corrections are the key activities of the Leader. This includes "walking the talk", consistency, continuous communication with the team, personal persuasiveness and clarity. The Leader is a kind of motor for the change – the moment he or she flags or shows a lack of resolve, the team will loose energy, and results will suffer.

One classic energizer involves expressing the vision and goals in a "story", which builds understanding and the desire for action in the followers. A great example of a "story" is John Kennedy's "put a man on the moon and return him home safely by the end of the decade". This energized an entire nation, its military and its industries. He stuck to the script, and even after his death, the mission was accomplished.

Phil Harkins does an excellent job of reviewing the impact of "Powerful Conversations" in his latest book. We see his insights as very helpful to the energizing phase of Leadership [ix]. The Leader's "story" takes careful note of the audience's perceptions, so he or she will be an excellent listener and judge of others. The story is expressed simply but powerfully, and it is repeated often. The Leader energizes the vision, the enablers, and the empowerment.

A critical activity of the Leader is also to provide feedback on progress, and to "course correct" as needed. There will be many mid-course corrections, to reach the goals whilst taking account of new information, roadblocks, issues and plain mistakes along the way. The vision remains constant – somebody once said "**Just when you are fed up with saying it that is when he or she gets it**"! A Leader cannot afford to stop saying it.

... and step 5: Execute

Strictly speaking, this is not a step, but a "surrounding" concept for the other 4 E's. Outstanding execution and follow through applies at every stage of the Leadership process.

We have sometimes been challenged that we should add yet another "E" to the framework – **Emotion.** There has been much written about Emotional Intelligence (developed by Daniel Goleman [x]), and it is an important concept. The concept includes self-awareness and impulse control, persistence, zeal and self-motivation, empathy, and social deftness. All are fundamental to excellent, personal Leadership skills.

In the 4 E's framework, however, we believe that **emotional intelligence fits inside the energizing role of a Leader**, rather than as a separate focus. We are helped to this conclusion by the many studies that demonstrate that successful Leaders have had a varied and challenging career. This puts them through their "Leadership training paces" at each stage, en route to becoming a world class Leader. By contrast, individuals who have not had the opportunity to build long-term programs, or who have spent all of their time in focus area, tend not to make the best Leaders. This breadth of experience, and the challenges associated with such a career, not only serve to broaden the Leader's skill base, but also help his or her emotional development. We believe there are thus three sequential stages in any Leader's personal development, which allows them all to be better energizers:

- **Learning the basic strategic and communication skills and how to use them**
- **Exhibiting Leadership behaviors in a day to day context – "walk the talk"**
- **Getting comfortable with the Leadership role**

The last point is where "emotional maturity" and "emotional intelligence" come most into play. That is where Goleman's work fits. It is no use just having all of the Leadership theory in your head – you must have the maturity to be able to use it and energize others.