“... citizen engagement is ... a two-way learning process between citizens and their democratic and public institutions.”

Jocelyne Bourgon

One cannot readily synthesize in a few pages the results of several days of intense communication among hundreds of executives and guests. Therefore, this short summary is not intended to be comprehensive nor to act in lieu of the experiences of the APEX symposium participants. Our purpose is more modest. For those who were there, this document is simply a set of notes to remind them of some themes worth pursuing – a memory boost. For those who were not there, our summary view is nothing more than a very personal and partial account of the symposium designed to help them share in the learning that went on in May 1998.

In an exercise such as this one, we have had to borrow shamelessly from the notes of many colleagues and friends, for we could not be at all of the simultaneously held sessions. We would like to thank them for their help and in particular to acknowledge the assistance of Jean Filion and James Lévêque.

Some will complain that we have missed certain important lessons from the symposium; others will suggest that we heard more than was really said and that in our effort to give some unity to this symposium, we may have embellished some contributions and been less than fair to others. To all these accusations, we plead guilty. Our effort has been guided by a wish to capture some of the spirit of the APEX symposium of May 1998 and to help continue the process of critical thinking that was “kickstarted” by the symposium.

We welcome your comments.
Introduction

The 1998 symposium of the Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service of Canada (APEX) was unusual. Past symposia addressed important but well circumscribed problems such as coping with change, stewardship, values, and how the public service contributes to Canada’s competitiveness. This one tackled head-on a very big issue – governance.

The choice to adopt a broader perspective is an echo of the times. After years of public sector reform, it is obvious that one cannot proceed any longer with quantitative changes at the margin without unwittingly initiating dramatic qualitative change.

Jocelyne Bourgon, Clerk of the Privy Council, stated the problem clearly in her inaugural address when she mentioned that in the recent past, Canada has been “redefining the role of government.” And Peter Harder, Secretary of the Treasury Board of Canada, who, as President of the 1998 APEX Symposium, drew some of the implications of this massive undertaking for the executives of the public sector by insisting on two major points: that the citizen is not a passive recipient of government services but has become “an active collaborator and partner in the processes of governance”; and that the ability to contribute to the pursuit of public interest most effectively depends on (he was associating personally with the community of public sector executives on this score) “our ability to think big, to think across organizational lines, to think forward. And this, in turn, will depend on our collective ability to . . . learn and to change.” This set the stage very broadly and the bar very high for the symposium.

In order to capture the different strands of the debates in the symposium, we have departed from a strict session-by-session summary. We sketch in the first two sections on the broad canvas defined in the two plenary sessions, which dealt explicitly with big governance issues. Then we insist on the centrality of civic engagement and consultation that transpired from these wide-ranging discussions. In the next section, we note the mises en garde uttered by the two luncheon speakers, John Ralston Saul and David Foot. We then examine the lessons that may be derived from the experiences of other countries. In the final section, we try to elicit from the debates some of the learning that emerged about the consequences of all this for leadership in the public sector executive community and about the most useful tools that might be used by them in this work. In conclusion, we reiterate a few of the central messages that emerged from the debates on May 27-28, 1998, at the Ottawa Congress Centre.

The governance triangle and the nation-state

In the months preceding the symposium, many discussions were held with social scientists and practitioners to help define a conceptual framework for the symposium. It became clear that governments have lost much of their power and legitimacy over the last decades, and that this has shifted much attention to non-state economic and social authorities and to their new importance in the governance of our national systems.

In inaugurating the symposium, Jocelyne Bourgon and Peter Harder reiterated this basic fact: we cannot go back to the unaffordable and insensitive state-led governing that existed in the past. This is not simply a matter of choice. The environment has changed, citizens and their expectations have changed, and new sites of power have emerged from stakeholders in the economy and society. In the new governance, the guidance of our national systems has become shared by ensembles of organizations rooted in the three sectors (economy, polity, and civil society and community).

To map out this new terrain, Boulding used a simple triangle, with each of these mechanisms of integration in its purest form (market exchange, state control, gift and reciprocity) at one of the apexes; the inner area represented organizations and institutions embodying different mixes of these integrative mechanisms. A lightly modified version of this triangle is presented in Figure 1.

This triangle is a cartography of the organizational terrain divided into three domains where the rules or mechanisms of coordination are based on different principles: the economic/market domain (B), where supply and demand forces and price mechanism are the norms; the state domain (C), where coercion and redistribution are the
rules; and the civil society domain (A), where cooperation, reciprocity and solidarity are the integrating principles. This corresponds roughly to the partitioning of human organizations into economy, polity and society.

The new governance has translated into three broad movements:

- From the late 19th century to the 1970s, government grew in importance to the point where probably half of measured pursuits fell into the general ambit of state and state-related activities. The boundaries have been displaced accordingly over time. More recently, there has been a vigorous countermovement of privatization and deregulation that has caused a reduction of the state sector and a reverse shift of the boundaries.²

- In parallel with these recent swings, there has been a tendency for the new socioeconomy to trigger the development of an ever larger number of mixed institutions, blending these different mechanisms to some extent (market-based public regulation, public-private-social partnering, etc.) in order to provide the necessary signposts and orientation maps in this new confused world. This has translated in the recent past into a much denser inner area of the Boulding triangle. Mixed institutions have been designed that are capable of providing the basis for cooperation, harmonization, dialogue and even co-decisions involving organizations from the three sectors.

- To cope with a turbulent environment, the new mixed organizations must use the environment strategically in much the same way as a surfer uses a wave to learn faster and to adapt more quickly. This calls for non-centralization, for an expropriation of the power to steer held by the top managers in an organization. This is very different from a unilateral decentralization, which can be rescinded. There must be constant negotiation and bargaining with partners. Managers must exploit all the favorable environmental circumstances and the full complement of imagination and resourcefulness in the heart and mind of each team player; they must become team leaders in task force-type projects, quasi-entrepreneurs capable of cautious suboptimizing in a turbulent environment.

These new modularized private, public and civic organizations cannot impose their views on their clients or citizens. The firm, very much like the state or civic organization, must consult. Deliberation and negotiation are everywhere moving away from goals and controls and deeply into intelligence and innovation. A society based on participation, negotiation and bargaining has more and more replaced one based on universal rights. The strategic organization has to become a broker, a negotiator, an animateur. In this network, a consultative and participative mode obtains among the socioeconomy, the firm, the state and the community.³

**Governing, governance, governability**

On this new stage, governing is no longer the prerogative of any single actor. Purposeful actions by the different stakeholders need to be coordinated and equilibrated. As a matter of consequence, a pattern of governance is likely to emerge rather than to be crafted. “Governing and governance are subjected to a permanent process of mutual interaction. Actors who govern, or try to govern, also influence the governance structure . . . Some [more powerful] actors have the possibility to rewrite some ‘rules of the game’ but no one has complete control. There is always some intended and unintended change, which creates maneuvering space for actors willing to change the existing...
We are entering an era where the governance process is a game of which no group can claim to be master.

Governability is a measure of the organization’s capability to govern itself within the context of broader systems of which it is part, and the environment within which it is nested. Governability makes no sense in a static context: it corresponds to the organization’s capacity to transform, to modify its structure, its process and even its substantive guidance mechanism and orientation.

Governing, governance and governability are obviously in a constant process of interaction: the gaps between governing needs and capabilities are likely to modify governing behavior, to transform the governance pattern, and to bring forth a variety of partnerships and joint ventures to respond to the challenges posed by the new turbulent environment. The emerging institutional order may not correspond to the one ensuring optimal governability, for it is not determined on the sole basis of efficiency: legitimacy, fairness, ethics, learning, etc., are becoming ever more important. The overall objective is to maintain a certain coherence through time for the organization as a bundle of coordination mechanisms, and yet not too much coherence, for it would prevent the organization from developing new instruments, new perspectives and new purposes.

This subtle search for coherence (but not too much) calls for a new political language to replace the traditional engineering language in the world of governance. The dynamic new “realities” of alliances, power, influences and constituencies have replaced the old static realities of property, structure, planning and control. In a world where the new assets are intangibles and mainly in the control of stakeholders, the challenge of governability is the challenge of transforming mercenaries owing loyalty only to themselves into members of a community interested in and capable of allegiance and reciprocal commitment.

In this new governance, the strategic role of the state is bound to be more modest than what it has been in the last 50 years. But it must ensure that appropriate organizations and partnerships can evolve, that citizens connect better with the market, and that civic engagement and entrepreneurship are rekindled through permissive and supportive framework interventions.

The two plenary sessions

In the first plenary session, much time was spent by both John McCallum and Marcel Côté in insisting that the nation-state is still a very important force. Marcel Côté recognized, however, that “nation-states matter less and less and their governance is becoming more difficult as the nature of things that can be achieved by nation-states becomes more and more limited.” He noted also that the “traditional role of the central government is also being eroded.” But he did not see much of a role in the new governance for civil society. For Côté, “Canada is kept together, first and above all, by a compact, and not by a common culture or common history,” a compact that ensures the provision of minimum resources no matter what the circumstances may be. He insisted that the nation-state and national institutions should be maintained for they are essential for the provision of these minimal resources.

John McCallum reminded the audience of some of the results of recent analyses of trade flows that show that a decade ago, trade among Canadian provinces was 20 times the province-to-state trade (Canada-U.S.) flows when distance is normalized, and that in 1998 it is still 12 times larger. He suggested that nation-states obviously still matter.

Both were optimistic that the relevance of the Canadian state is not in question, even though they admitted that some change is in order. One point, however, on which they both agreed is that the so-called new role of the civic society was overplayed. Côté reduced it in the question period to a cluster of state-funded lobbies, while McCallum claimed not to know really what was meant by the “third sector.”

Chantal Hébert was less optimistic about both the resilience of the nation-state and the willingness of the federal government to accept the changes dictated by an evolving environment. She suggested that the federal government was suffering from a sort of “Penelope syndrome” – in the hope that Ulysses would return from the
Trojan expedition, Penelope was in the habit of postponing her decision about a new spouse until her trousseau was completed. To ensure that there would be no progress, she would undo at night whatever progress in her knitting had been made during the day. In Ms. Hébert's view, the federal government appears determined to cling to visibility whatever the circumstances in order to maintain its legitimacy, even if doing so could negatively affect the country's well-being and stability.

What emerged clearly from the first plenary session was that the representatives of the private sector appeared much less keenly aware of the new importance of an active citizenry and civil society than the public sector executives.

The second plenary session carried the debate a step further. Frank Graves was able to show persuasively that trust in the federal government has declined over the years, that the citizenry has understood the need for greater federal-provincial and private-public-civic partnerships and is demanding a greater degree of involvement and engagement in the public policy process. There is indeed a strong demand for triangle-wide governance. Graves also noted important information on how citizens want to be consulted and how limited their expectations seem to be.

The Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Wayne Wouters, presented this demand for citizen engagement as an opportunity – an occasion to tap their brainpower, to better understand their needs and expectations. But he also pointed to three important barriers standing in the way of a truly participatory democratic system. These barriers underline the dramatic changes required if the citizenry is going to be truly and fully engaged.

- The first barrier is our representative/parliamentary system which may be incompatible with the use of the tools of direct democracy. It may well be that the political masters will be reluctant to accept citizen engagement if it means a loss of control or a questioning of ministerial responsibility.

- The second barrier comes from the difficulty of managing expectations. It is hard to know whether the officials will be able to persuade the citizens, once they have been asked for their view, to refrain from insisting they be given full currency.

- The third barrier is linked to the fact that citizen engagement is costly and time consuming and may not be easy in an era when the bureaucracy has been significantly downsized and suffers from change fatigue.

Wouters was cautiously optimistic. He felt that citizen engagement would require a cultural change but that the transition had already begun. He mentioned the need for this work to be done in concert with the provinces. He stressed that initiatives like the interdepartmental working group on engagement, the ADM forums and PCO work on citizen engagement and the interdepartmental working group on the voluntary sector were evidence that the new governance is en émergence.

Marcel Massé, the President of the Treasury Board, was also aware that, as the public opinion polls report, citizens do not feel that they are heard or listened to. Therefore he agreed that the new cohort of public sector executives must find ways to assess the wishes of the governed. Yet he warned that this is a treacherous and difficult task. Those who pretend to speak for the governed (interest groups, lobbies) may not necessarily represent the views of the citizens. Therefore Massé recognized not only that many have withdrawn their consent to be governed, but also, as had Côté and McCallum, that the alternative appears to be a form of direct democracy that may be dangerous. The dilemma is clear: either one is willing to embark on such a process with no return, or one must avoid consultation and accept that leadership will be continually challenged.

Without making a final statement, Marcel Massé recognized the nature of the dilemma. This presentation also served as an example of how politicians, like bureaucrats, seem much more sensitive to these changes in the governance process than the representatives of the private sector.

Citizen engagement and consultation

At the core of the new governance are the challenges of citizen engagement. The notion of a citizen-centered governance as sketched by Jocelyne Bourgon has important consequences for the bureaucracy. It entails the dawn of a new era of 360-degree accountability. The citizen being engaged means that the bureaucrats must become
accountable simultaneously to a variety of people all around them (citizens, community of practice, deputy-ministers, parliament, etc.). While most participants at the symposium regarded citizen involvement as both desirable and necessary, they all emphasized the great difficulties inherent in any effort to implement a truly participative system.

This thorny problem was approached from a variety of angles at the symposium. In three sessions (connecting citizens and government, responsiveness of public institutions, social policy), the challenge of citizen engagement was confronted head on. Insiders and outsiders, observers and practitioners, participants from the private, public and civic sectors, politicians and bureaucrats were all asked to wrap their mind around this basic issue. If no definitive answers were forthcoming, many important insights were brought to the symposium by the dozen or so guests who engaged in a heated debate on this question.

Summarizing this rich exchange is like trying to make a snowstorm from a few snowflakes, but a few particularly important ideas emerged. We have summarized them under three headings: some probing of the connection between citizens and government; examination of the sensitivity of public institutions to citizen; and social policy as a case study in citizen-government interaction.

In dealing with the connection between citizens and governments, there were three complementary statements:

- Kathy O’Hara, Research Fellow at the Canadian Policy Research Networks, took a more conceptual approach to the issue. She made a point of emphasizing that citizen engagement is not lobbying and advocacy, nor consultation – it is an exchange and communication about values and orientation. As such, it must be balanced with interest group consultation and the accountability framework of the political and bureaucratic leaders. Drawing much on the work of Daniel Yankelovitch, she underlined the importance of the skills necessary for generating and sustaining dialogue, and the different scale and scope of these exercises. In particular, she suggested that governments and civic sector institutions can play a key role as sponsor and guarantor of the integrity of such processes. She also noted the evolution of the relationship between citizens and governments over the last decades and captured it in a simple graph (see Figure 2).

- Kim Devooght of IBM focused on the degree of connection between citizens and governments in the information age and on the importance of information technology as a facilitator. He suggested that the technology for citizen engagement is in place but that less than 10 percent of citizens are either connected or super-connected. Before one can hope to see more citizen engagement, it will be necessary to ensure universal access and privacy in such dialogues with citizens, and to effect much education so that they can engage in the debates in an enlightened way. For the time being, too many are not connected and too many issues are debated without sufficient knowledge.

- Jean-Pierre Kingsley, Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, emphasized the technical difficulties of meaningful citizen engagement. The process of citizen engagement is costly and there is no point in designing a useful system unless one can ensure universal access and allow for citizens to enter into a dialogue with their governments early enough in the public policy process for them to have an impact on the policy formulation. Otherwise, citizens are faced with faits accomplis.

On the responsiveness of public institutions, the testimonies were somewhat muted. It was not so much that there was nothing to say as that the participants found it extremely difficult to generalize about the sensitivity of the whole institutional order on the basis of limited vignettes in three particular directions. Moreover, there was a certain reluctance to point to non-responsiveness in such particular cases as if this form of indictment could be regarded as not in keeping with the appropriate etiquette.

- Tim Plumptre, President of the Institute on Governance, reflected on responsiveness as the new mantra and commented on the difficulty of effecting satisfactory responsiveness given the current accountability structures (requirements of confidentiality, overlapping mandates, turf wars, etc.).

- Elizabeth Dowdeswell, a senior adviser at Environment Canada, reflected on the extraordinary inertia that comes with the consensus rule in international
organizations. This renders responsiveness doubly difficult.

- Don Boudria, Government Leader in the House of Commons, used the ice storm of Winter 1998 as an example of the capacity of governments and officials to react in crisis situations. While this was an interesting case study, it revealed very little about the day-to-day responsiveness of public institutions in Canada within the new emerging governance system.

On the social policy front, there was no difficulty of focus, but it proved extremely difficult to reach clear conclusions.

- Alex Himelfarb presented a short history of social policy in Canada and noted that the new social policy requires the courage to engage Canadians so that change can be effected and an affordable and sustainable policy can be constructed in light of the experience of the last decades with all the partners at the table.

- Monique Jérôme-Forget, President of the Institute for Research on Public Policy, emphasized the chasm between the elected and the citizenry and reviewed the difficulties generated by the federal structure, the accountability system and the ill-defined nature of the third sector, etc., in arriving at any imaginative strategy likely to generate a sustainable social policy.

- Gregory Marchildon, Cabinet Secretary for the Saskatchewan government, illustrated the nexus of difficulties facing social policy makers by reference to the Saskatchewan case. He emphasized the conditions for an effective provincial social policy: good federal-provincial relations; active and critical citizens willing to take risks; and an imaginative bureaucracy capable of designing well-adjusted policies.

It has become clear that what has worked well in Saskatchewan is in part ascribable to an effort to engage not only the citizens but also the middle-level and junior-level
bureaucrats so as to make the policies more responsive to local circumstances. The importance of these mediating structures within the bureaucracy have probably not been sufficiently emphasized in the debates about citizen engagement.

Mises en garde

Two academics of some repute were invited as luncheon speakers to provoke and stimulate critical thinking as a result of observations from a terrain very far from public sector executive activities. Both John Ralston Saul, the philosopher and novelist, author of the best-seller *Voltaire’s Bastards*, and David Foot, the economist-demographer at the University of Toronto and author of the best-seller *Boom, Bust and Echo*, played this role well.

- Saul emphasized the centrality of open debates, that there is a need to provoke such debates and to fuel them, for they are not only the source of engagement for the citizen but also a way to make the citizen a true producer of governance. He also commented on the importance of public servants as mediators in this national multilogue designed to reveal the true “union of ideas about the public good” on which Canada is built.

- Foot made a number of points very strongly. First, the young generation in Canada (citizens under 35 years of age) do not recognize themselves in the present priorities of governments or the public service. Second, there is no one in the public service to speak for them. Third, the public service must find ways to recruit, retain and promote members of this cohort. The consequent illegitimacy of the governing institutions can only be repaired by measures to phase out aging public servants to make room for new recruits.

These two *mises en garde* – emphasizing that the economic biases and the present-day individualistic values may not represent the true priorities of Canada and the extent to which young Canadians feel disenfranchised – point to difficulties that are likely to make citizen engagement even more difficult than has been anticipated. The misplaced concreteness of the present debates and the exclusion of young Canadians from the forum are bound to make the multilogue more difficult.

The sort of participative and interactive governance *en émergence* will consequently require that much attention be paid to the creation of a meaningful public philosophy for the 21st century. This in turn entails going beyond the present day’s somewhat simplistic views of the relationship between citizens and their government. One must escape the triple danger of a philosophy of entitlement by the citizen, a philosophy of sacrifice of the citizen demanded by governments, or of a libertarian philosophy that would entail the elimination of governments.

As for the possibility of universal access and the elimination of exclusion, it is more than simply a demographic issue, according to Foot. Too many groups are for the time being effectively excluded from being able to engage meaningfully as citizens for the new governance to be legitimate. A momentous effort to ensure universal access is therefore likely to be a crusade one cannot avoid.

International lessons

There was no effort to effect wide and comprehensive coverage of the international scene at the May 1998 APEX symposium; however, several interesting experiences were discussed by two diplomats, Stephen Jacobi from New Zealand and Derick Moyo from South Africa.

- New Zealand has chosen a system of governance built squarely on the market process. It has been constructed on a few simple principles: the state does not indulge in activities that can be better done by the private sector; the costs of government departments are based on market gauges; senior managers are firmly empowered and accountable; and central agency control is minimized. Deputy ministers (called permanent secretaries in New Zealand) are appointed, after an international search, for a period of five years, with a right of renewal after three years. They are asked to sign annual performance agreements stipulating outputs and measures of timeliness and quality.
After South Africa’s first democratic election in 1994, it inherited a very inefficient, top-down, illegitimate and non-accountable governance system. It has effected a major effort both to restructure the governance system, and to make the governance system more transparent and more representative.

These international experiences do not represent a true model for Canada: as Jocelyne Bourgon clearly emphasized in her inaugural address, the way in which the governance system is structured depends on the circumstances and value systems of each country. But what is clear from these two experiences is the ever-present temptation to deal with complex problems with the use of simple governance tools. The New Zealand case is a gambit on market-driven-type organizations that may not provide the sort of division of labour among sectors likely to provide the best results. Some of the social costs of this form of governance (rise in anomie and indicators of social distress) are already apparent. As for South Africa, the massive reconstruction requires strong state leadership, but the current reflections on governance there make it clear that its aim is to construct a truly triangle-wide governance system.

Practical ideas for leaders

Obviously a symposium like this one would not make sense if none of the derived lessons were about the best ways to build transitions to the new forms of governance or about the most effective manner in which leadership can be expressed. Those issues are difficult to synthesize because particular circumstances dictate very different ways to accomplish this sort transition and call for different forms of leadership. Yet a few general points that were debated at the symposium deserve close attention.

John Alexander from the Centre for Creative Leadership drew from the vast experience of the Centre in his remarks. The new pattern of governance demands competencies from managers quite different from those required in the past. It also has an important impact on the mix of education, training and personal development likely to enable the leaders and managers to be ready for the future. This will be clear to anyone familiar with the range of competencies explored by La Relève. Since the new organization has to become a learning organization, the new federal leader/manager cannot ordain or command any longer: he or she must consult, negotiate, act as coach, animateur, designer, advocate, etc.

The competencies that will be essential in this new world have not yet been fully documented. They appear to fall into four general groups: (1) contextual competencies; (2) interpersonal skills; (3) ability to create an effective corporate climate; and (4) systems values. In many ways, these competencies have been explicitly mentioned by Jocelyne Bourgon, Peter Harder and Peter Harrison.

In the first group, one can identify a number of important competencies and tools that are unlikely to be developed in management programs: acknowledging uncertainty, recognizing the full implications of the fact that there is no reliable theory of social change, the capacity to entertain two logics at the same time, embracing error, building bridges and strengthening links, reframing problems to explore new solutions, and the capacity to assess regulation according to values and norms.

In the second group, one can identify the whole range of communication skills and tools that will be required in a variety of contexts: consultation; negotiation; deliberation; conflict resolution; facilitation; acting as a broker, a preceptor, an educator, an animateur. There is also the capacity to adopt new roles and attitudes.

In the third group, one may retain the central importance of facilitating a shift toward perceiving the organization as a learning system; the capacity to enable and empower individuals; and a culture of productivity, responsiveness, creativity – a learning culture.

In the fourth group, one can focus on the new ethic driven by the new reality of interconnectedness and interdependence that forces a redefinition of leadership: away from leaders as generals to leaders as “leaders of leaders” – those who remove the obstacles that prevent their followers from making creative and effective decisions for themselves. What is at stake in leadership is “the ability to stay the course while ‘rocking the boat’ to enhance organizational readiness and competitiveness in an unpredictable environment.”
These new competencies cannot be acquired solely through a bookish mode of instruction or action. One is not simply attempting to develop a broader knowledge base or a few particular skills (although much of this is also happening), but to promote personal development. Effective leaders lead change by reflecting the values of their followers after having done much listening, because effective leaders are principled but also pragmatic. They tend to bring their followers beyond their limits, but not unreasonably fast and not unreasonably far beyond such limits.

This message came out loud and clear from General Roméo Dallaire’s presentation. To be followers, team members must first respect their leader and be persuaded that their welfare is the objective of the leader, who has their needs and aspirations at heart. The leader’s ability to lead, as O’Toole puts it, is a by-product of the trust he or she has earned by serving them. This sort of leadership cannot play itself out unless the leader and the followers develop a capacity to appreciate the limits imposed by mutual obligations. It pertains not to the traditional-functional top-down organization nor does it fit the matrix form of organization where vertical-functional and horizontal-process rapports are supposedly keeping each another in check. Rather, it is built on a multifunctional esprit de corps that provides a fertile ground for social learning.

While much of this new coordination is fuzzy and built on moral contracts, it must be clear that it represents the only effective way to guide the organization and nudge it in different directions. This sort of leadership is what is required in the armed forces as well as in civilian circumstances in the private, public and civic sectors. The comments of General Dallaire and of Nick Mulder from Stentor provided ample evidence in support of the many points developed above.

At the session on employee engagement, it became clear that the forces at work and the leadership required parallel those required in generating citizen engagement. What emerged from this session was less a “bag of tricks” than a few operating principles put forward by Bob Chartier, Corporate Management Consultant, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada; Peter Harrison, Head, Task Force on La Relève; Danielle Vincent, ADM, Quebec Region, Revenue Canada; and Michael Nurse, ADM, Public Works and Government Services Canada:

- Leadership and learning are inextricably linked, so executives must embed learning in their organizations.
- The public service is suffering from “meeting fatigue” – management retreats in particular appear to have little impact. What is needed is something practical to show change.
- Executives must “walk the talk.”
- Executives must create an ongoing dialogue with their staff if they want them to become team members.
- As partners, leaders and their teams must share values and respect each other.
- The participation of team members must be valued and they must be interested in the projects they work on.
- Executives must communicate, communicate, communicate.
- There must be active ways to implicate staff in the process of clarifying needs, making decisions and bringing forward recommendations.
- There must be a mutual process of developing approaches and solutions.

Many of these principles are already in operation and many forums (regional councils, management forums, etc.) have been created recently. However, none of them have yet achieved the degree of integration necessary to fuel a true learning organization. Consequently, we are only slouching toward the new governance and leadership is more necessary than ever.
S T R A W S  I N  T H E  W I N D

Endnotes


