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## Where Have All the Leaders Gone? (Part III)

### Move over, baby boomers. The emerging leaders have a different set of experiences, expectations, and rules

by [Bill George](#)

When Jimmy Connors reached the top of the tennis world, reporters asked whether he could continue to beat the veterans. His blunt response: "I'm only worried about the young guys coming up behind me."

Well, baby boomers, watch out, because the emerging leaders are coming up fast behind you. Their approach to leadership is entirely different than yours. They don't care about position power, status, and organizational hierarchy, or even having followers. Instead, they are superb networkers who find collaborators to create opportunities and businesses. They are on line 24/7, always networking, always in touch. That's why [Facebook](#) and You Tube are so popular.

The emerging leaders are knowledge workers who typically know more than their bosses. They collaborate with people who have skills they don't. Growing up with diversity as the norm, they understand the benefits of diverse people working together to solve the world's most pressing problems.

#### Detest Corporate Politics

When considering large, well-established organizations, they see bureaucracy, layers of management, policies and procedures, and rules—all things that scare them. At their core they are flexible, fast-moving, and innovative, and they don't want their creativity stifled. They detest corporate politics, as they want to be judged on their merits and have freedom to get things done.

Most important, they want to lead now and use their considerable skills to make a difference. They are highly confident about their abilities and won't wait in line for years to get their chance. They are willing to make great sacrifices to accomplish their goals. If current opportunities aren't satisfying, they won't hesitate to move to more appealing situations.

They anticipate long, active lives—living well beyond 100—but want to make it now. They have a passion to change the world and aren't prepared to settle for less.

## The Next Generation

Who are these new leaders? The leading edge includes fortysomethings like Randy Komisar, former chief executive of LucasArts, now at [Kleiner Perkins](#); [John Donahoe](#) at eBay ([EBAY](#)); Donna Dubinsky, founder of [Handspring](#) and Numenta; [Kent Thiry](#), who infused kidney-dialysis company DaVita with new life in 1999; Chip Conley, founder of [Joie de Vivre Hotels](#); and [Bruce Chizen](#), CEO of Adobe ([ADBE](#)). They follow in the footsteps of role models such as [Howard Schultz](#), [Bill Gates](#), and [Michael Dell](#).

Let's take a closer look at some younger leaders who are ready to step onto the big stage:

- Wendy Kopp had such passion for improving inner-city education that she founded [Teach For America](#) at only 22. With no money or management experience, she overcame enormous obstacles, including resistance from the educational establishment. Nevertheless, she survived early financial crises and created the most successful educational initiative in the past quarter-century, for which she was recognized as one of America's Best Leaders by Harvard's Kennedy School.
- At 33, Jaime Irick already is a division general manager at General Electric ([GE](#)). He was a star at the U.S. Military Academy, served in Kuwait, and got his MBA from Harvard before joining GE four years ago. Irick observes: "Leadership isn't about you. You've got to flip that switch and understand that leading is serving the folks on your team."
- Social entrepreneurs Alan Khazei and Vanessa Kirsch are a high-powered couple. Khazei co-founded City Year, the successful urban Peace Corps and was also named one of America's Best Leaders. Kirsch founded [Public Allies](#) and now heads New Profit, a venture fund for nonprofits.
- Dina Powell is one of the new global leaders who move comfortably between sectors. A native of Egypt, she made her mark as head of the White House Personnel Office, became special assistant to Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice, and recently joined the executive office of Goldman Sachs ([GS](#)).
- With six colleagues, 27-year-old [McKinsey](#) consultant Matt Hemsley founded Minneapolis-based LEAD, dedicated to engaging the younger generation in personal philanthropy. LEAD has already signed up 400 young leaders.
- A senior at Seattle University, 19-year-old Seattle entrepreneur Brayden Olson founded Novel Conceptions ([NC](#)) two years ago to create virtual-world experiences that contribute to human development.

These emerging leaders understand that it takes collaboration among people with broad perspectives and passion to address the world's most challenging problems: health care, education, energy and the environment, poverty, and global peace. They are likely to become

global citizens who can move comfortably among three major sectors—government, for profit, and not-for-profit—to get things done. Their passion for changing the world keeps them from letting established organizations or bureaucratic barriers stand in their way.

To that I say, Bravo! We need all of your energy, enthusiasm, and idealism to make this world a better place. The very best time for you to step and lead is now!

As anthropologist Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt the power of a small group of people to change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

[George](#), professor of management practice at Harvard Business School, is the author of two best-selling books, *True North* and *Authentic Leadership*. The former chairman and chief executive of Medtronic, he serves on the boards of ExxonMobil, Goldman Sachs, and Novartis.

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