



## THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

In the closing session of the conference, Rosabeth Moss Kanter, the Ernest L. Arbuckle Professor at Harvard Business School, told participants, "Leadership for change is leadership for high performance. Because in the world we live in – which is a world of change – the only way you get high performance is by being able to master change." She added that all organizations – including foundations – must grapple with change if they are to keep up with the world around them.

Kanter asserted that foundations' external impact is connected to having effective internal practices. "Changing the organization internally often requires using the same principles that you use to be effective externally," she said, noting that very few organizations that enjoy external success are a "mess" internally.

With that in mind, Kanter suggested seven key skills necessary for leading change.

- 1. Manage by facts.** "Without the facts, without the data, it is almost impossible for organizations to be effective," she said, citing the Iraq war as an example of what can happen when data is ignored or suppressed.
- 2. Use "kaleidoscope" thinking.** Mimic a kaleidoscope's ability to arrange and rearrange the same fragments into an infinite number of patterns. "Leadership for change starts with getting people to see new things and new ways of doing things," she said, adding that innovation results from setting themes and destinations without creating a specific plan. "Think of it as improvisational theater rather than traditional theatre," she suggested.
- 3. Communicate a compelling vision.** People need to be inspired and uplifted, but they also need to understand how they will reach their goal. "A vision can't be simply a grand statement



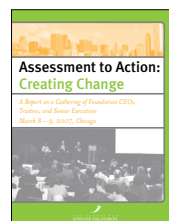
ROSABETH MOSS KANTER, HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL

of possibility. A vision also must include a theory about why the steps we are taking now will get us to the Promised Land," she asserted.

- 4. Build coalitions.** "Every successful change master was not successful because they did it by themselves, but because they got other people's buy-in," she noted. Suggesting that foundations convene with others more often, Kanter said that the best way to obtain staff buy-in for foundation change is to have them meet with grantees and other stakeholders to learn what the change could do for them.
- 5. Foster collaboration and teamwork.** Collaboration and teamwork require a collective definition of success that everyone works toward, regardless of their job function. "It doesn't mean that everybody has to sit in the same room making exactly the same decision. It does mean people know how to support each other in order to multiply their impact," she said, suggesting that innovation is enhanced when people collaborate across areas, work on crossfunctional

teams, and, most important, have leaders who demand that they do so.

- 6. **Persevere.** When you hit a barrier, all the other skills – using data, kaleidoscope thinking, communicating a compelling vision, coalition building, and teamwork – will serve you well. “The definition of success is how long you give it before you give up,” she said, citing Nelson Mandela as the epitome of perseverance.
  
- 7. **Celebrate success.** “Make everyone a hero. Success results from the hard work of a lot of people,” she reminded the audience.



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