

# MILLENNIUM— Leadership Capsules for the 21st Century

## Capsule #5—Beginning Employment Relationships

### Facilitation and Self-Study Guide

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## Looking to the Millennium

I remember 1970. I had just graduated from high school and was getting ready to head off to university. Leaving home seemed a wonderful adventure and I was filled with awe at the opportunities and anxiety at the uncertainty. I remember thinking how significant it was that this huge milestone in my life had fallen at the beginning of a new decade.

I also remember thinking that in 3 more decades—an eternity, it would be the end of the millennium. I thought of how funny it would be to be part of the graduating class in the year 2000. What would they be called? The class of zero?

And now, here we are. Eternity didn't really take very long at all. But in those thirty years it seems that everything has changed.

We used to pop popcorn on the stove. My children find this idea fascinating. “Why didn't you use the microwave?” they ask. We all worked in office buildings or factories. Now many of us run businesses in our homes or telecommute. We used to get a job and keep it forever. In 1970 people in the United States were amused by the little cars coming out of Japan and derided their quality. In 1970 there was no CNN. In 1970 there was no cellular telephone industry. In 1970 no one owned a home computer. A Macintosh was an apple—the kind you eat. The world was clearly divided into the good guys (us) and the bad guys (remember them?).

A millennium feels like something really big. Historically, that's been true. In the first century, paper was invented in China. It has taken 2000 years for us to develop a better medium for recording information. Around the same time, the city of London was founded by the Romans. Events happened of such tremendous historical and spiritual consequence that they still have a profound impact on our lives today.

So it is with those familiar feelings of awe at the opportunities mixed with anxiety at the uncertainty of it all that I look ahead at the millennium on whose doorstep we stand. Things will be profoundly different. They already are. Changes in how we do what we do happen at speeds that are mind-numbing.

Our organizations face these same forces. They are scrambling to redefine themselves so that they will remain relevant in a world that is in a state of constant, rapid flux. Charting the course, setting the mission, sharing a vision, opening to new learning have become the key skills that leaders need. But what does that mean on a day to day basis? How does being a LEADER change how you hire people? Or fire people? Or provide feedback? Or coach your team?

We need to create bridges between where we are coming from and where we are going. That is the purpose of this series. MILLENNIUM—Leadership Capsules for the 21st Century is 7 short bridges linking management functions and leadership skills. Each 15 minute capsule is a thought provoking discussion of the issues managers, supervisors, team leaders and others playing a leadership role in their organizations face daily. They can be used as part of a comprehensive learning experience or as refresher material to revisit concepts already explored. They can be presented in a facilitated classroom setting or as part of a self-directed study program. They are versatile tools designed to support a wide range of learning situations.

In my collaboration with a team of extraordinary leaders, I've learned a tremendous amount while producing MILLENNIUM. I hope you will find the series as rewarding to work with as I have.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robt Rosell." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R" and a small "t" in "Robt".

Robert Rosell  
Producer

## How to Use this Guide

### Program Format

MILLENNIUM—Leadership Capsules for the 21st Century contains seven different programs:

- #1 Leadership Is . . .
- #2 The Leader as Coach
- #3 The Leader as Mentor
- #4 Providing Performance Feedback
- #5 Beginning Employment Relationships
- #6 Ending Employment Relationships
- #7 In Compliance

The material in the MILLENNIUM capsules looks at the practical skills that are necessary to be a leader in today's complex and ever changing world. It introduces viewers to the all-important notion that each of us, at one time or another, no matter what our position in an organization, must be leaders in the 21st century. Throughout the series, experts provide us with practical ideas about leadership, and help us prepare for the realities of leading in the next millennium. The material in this booklet supports the video capsule you will be using.

### Using the Guide

The material in MILLENNIUM is complex and requires a good amount of reflection, and a willingness to practice known and new skills. For that reason each of the booklets is divided into three parts:

- Part One Reflecting on the Material Covered in the Leadership Capsule
- Part Two Discussing the Capsule
- Part Three Working with the Material Presented in the Capsule

The support material can be used in three different ways: for self-study, for team presentation and discussion, or for direct facilitation.

## Self-Study Approach

If you are using this material for self-study, the best way to benefit from the topic being covered is to turn to Part One of the booklet and complete the exercises. Most of the exercises presented help you explore the topic through your own experiences and ideas. Continue with this approach by viewing the entire video capsule. Following the video, reflect on the questions in Handout 5 of the Guide, comparing your own ideas with those expressed by the experts in the video. You may prefer to continue by reading through Part Two, which is a synopsis of comments presented in the video. Move onto Part Three and complete the exercises.

## Team Approach

A team would do best by following the self-study method outlined above. Each team member could individually complete the exercises presented in Part One, and then view the video together. Following seeing the video, the team could engage in a discussion of the material. This discussion can be facilitated by the questions and responses offered in Part Two. The team can elect to complete the follow-up exercises and activities in Part Three individually or as a group.

## Facilitation Approach

If the MILLENNIUM series is used as a training, the method of how to use this book would vary slightly to those outlined previously. The facilitator of the training should view the video capsule first. Following the viewing of the video, (s)he can review the exercises in Part One. A decision can be made about how or if any of these exercises would be incorporated in the training presentation for the capsule. As a part of constructing the training design, the facilitator can elect which questions would be used for discussion. These can be found in Part Two. In the same way, the exercises offered in Part Three can be reviewed, and a decision made as to which ones would be incorporated into the training.

All exercises, activities, and discussion questions are sequentially presented to follow the presentation of the material in the video capsule. All printed materials for all three formats is contained in this booklet. Handouts for participants are located throughout the booklet.

The only additional materials needed for exercises and activities are either a black or white board or flip charts for writing observations or recording information from brainstorming or other activities.

## Discussion Questions for the Capsules

A list of discussion questions is presented in the booklet. This page can be copied and distributed to participants when the program is being used for training. Part Two contains a summary of material covered in the program as it relates to these questions.

## Handouts and Photocopying Rights

Handouts pages that are part of the training are located throughout the program booklets. There are approximately three to five activities contained in “Part Three: Working with the Material” section of each program booklet. Trainers need only to decide which of the activities and exercises would be relevant for individual distribution, and have copies made. With the purchase of the MILLENNIUM—Leadership Capsules for the 21st Century series, Quality Media Resources, Inc. grants you license to make as many copies of this guide or the handout pages as you need for your organization. However, copying the videos is illegal.

## Bibliography for MILLENNIUM

The bibliography includes works that relate to leadership and working in the 21st century. It is not a definitive list, but rather is intended to assist individuals or teams of workers who are interested in expanding their understanding and knowledge about leadership, and related leadership topics for the 21st century workplace.

# MILLENNIUM—

## Leadership Capsules for the 21st Century

### Part One: Reflecting on Beginning Employment Relationships

As in other Millennium capsules, “Beginning Employment Relationships” is grounded in the reality of change, and how it is impacting an organization. In this program, the subject is employment relationships, and particularly how these relationships begin. The specific topics covered include:

- Reviewing the ways in which change has impacted the hiring process.
- Considering the interview process.
- Soliciting information from the candidate in order to get the right person for the job.
- Presenting what a candidate needs to know about the work for which (s)he is interviewing.
- Providing an overview of leadership’s role in beginning employment relationships.

#### Reflecting on Personal Ideas

Everyday millions of people begin the day thinking about changing jobs, beginning a new career, or actually going out on an interview in hopes of landing work. Whether you are on the interviewing end, or the person being interviewed, there are a few commonalities that we need to consider. Review the information that follows and think about your last job search or the last interview you conducted. How did these principals play out for you?

## Interviewer

- Know what qualities, skills, and characteristics you need for this work, and for the organization. Balance organizational “fit” with the need for diversity of styles and ideas.
- Base your selection on facts, not necessarily on how you like the person. Check references.
- Don’t make a decision by yourself. Get input from other colleagues.
- Assess the candidate’s values to see if there is a match with the organization’s values.

## Candidate

- Know your talents, skills, qualities, and be able to present them clearly, and honestly.
- Explore what the organization is looking for, get the facts, and assess your strengths and needs. Provide letters of reference.
- Indicate that you would like to speak with people you may be working with in the company.
- Assess the organization’s values to see if there is a match with your own values.

# Recalling Some of Your Past Interviews Handout 1

If you are working, you most probably got hired through an interview. How did you fare? What was your anxiety level before going in? When did you calm down? When were you able to take control of the conversation and truly be yourself? Or did you have difficulty getting to that point?

Experience says that the more prepared we are for an interview the better we feel, and the better we are able to share who we are with the interviewer. In the space that follows record your last two interviews. As you write out what happened, keep in mind the following questions:

- How did the interview start?
- Was the job explained?
- Did you have an opportunity to talk about your strengths and skills?
- What questions did you ask about the job?
- How did the interview end?
- How did you feel following the interview?

Interview One

Interview Two

# The Ideal Interview

# Handout 2

After reading through your interview experiences above, consider what it would have taken to make those particular interviews ideal. What would you have done differently? What could the interviewer have done differently? Record your observations below. Following the video capsule, review your ideas with those expressed by the experts. Return to this exercise and write down the differences, and the points learned. This should be valuable information for the future.

In an ideal interview, the person interviewing should:

In an ideal interview, the person seeking employment should:

New points learned by viewing the video capsule:

- 
- 
- 
-

# Getting Ready to Seek Employment and Go For an Interview

## Handout 3

Did you stumble into your last job? How much homework did you do to make certain that you were applying to a company that matched your interests, values, and skills? Most of us are looking at changing careers more often than our parents changed jobs. We aren't only going to be working for more organizations in the future, we are going to be doing different types of jobs within those organizations. We have to be concerned about multiplying our skills, and getting involved in an organization which encourages this growth.

Think about how you would go about looking for another job. Respond to the categories below. If you are in a position of interviewing someone you might want to explore how some of these categories can be brought into the interview process.

What to do as you are considering working for an organization

- How is this organization viewed in the community?
- How do people who work there feel about the leadership and the communication inside of the organization?
- How can you succeed in this organization?
- What is the administrative design of the company? Does this design tell you something about the possible operation of the organization?
- Is there a good training and orientation program for new hires?

What you should do in preparing for the interview

- Consider your skills, talents, strengths and needs.
- Think through accomplishments you have had in other jobs, and the types of processes and skills you learned on the job.
- Record all the questions you want to know about the work for which you are interviewing. Combine questions when possible, and prioritize them. Find out about performance feedback and evaluation procedures, and if employees are offered mentoring opportunities.
- Consider how the organization networks with other organizations, and the community.

# Getting Ready to Interview a Potential Employee

## Handout 4

The very best way to think about conducting an interview for a potential employee is to think about yourself being in the interviewee's shoes. If there is a job opening in your organization use it as a model to complete this exercise. If there are no openings, select a position and complete the exercise below by using the hypothetical position.

Brainstorm all the questions you might have if you were coming for an interview to your organization. There are a few questions listed below just to get you started. After listing the questions you think should be explored in the interview, take time to zero in on questions that are specific to the job now, and as it may evolve in the future. (Note: Try and stay away from having the candidate hypothesize about the future of the position. Rather, offer some projections about the vision of the organization, and how the job is evolving.) Finally, consider what would make you feel prepared in the interview, and what would make the person interviewed feel comfortable.

### General Questions for an Interview

*(Create questions that allow for the candidate to give you specific information from their past experience and which help draw out the types of skills and competencies (s)he will be bringing into this relationship. General questions allow you to observe skills (e.g., problem solving, creative thinking, communication) that would be necessary in almost any position)*

1. What was a major challenge you faced in your previous job and how did you deal with it?
2. From your past experience, tell us about a situation where there was a great deal of tension. How did you go about working in this situation?
- 3.
- 4.

# Getting Ready to Interview

# Handout 4, page 2

## Specific Questions for an Interview

(Create questions that relate to the critical skills and knowledge that will be required as part of the job.)

1.

2.

3.

## Preparing for the Interview

1. Candidate knows the date, time and place of the interview.
2. Space is available and appropriate for the interview.
3. Questions are prepared in advance.
4. If this is a team or group interview, every participant knows their role and responsibilities.

## Part Two: Watching the Video Capsule

Watch the video in its entirety. The questions below have been provided to help you center a discussion around the concepts it presents. When necessary restructure and add to the questions in order for the discussion to best suit your own organization.

### **1. How will we be working in the 21st century? And with whom?**

Workplace relationships are changing dramatically as we move into the 21st century. They are becoming more transformative and transient. More people are working in non-traditional work spaces—the virtual office. Either through choice or by being forced out of their existing situation, many individuals are working for themselves or as consultants or contract employees.

In and out of the organization we will find more diverse groups of people—people of various ages, abilities, races, ethnicities, national backgrounds—working in teams and through networks. More and more work is spreading out across the country and throughout the globe.

### **2. What is the goal of the interviewing process? What are you trying to learn?**

The interviewing process is a tool in deciding whether there is a match between what an individual brings to the job—potential, skills, education—and what the organization needs. The interview is an opportunity to see how the candidate relates to other people, to gain a glimpse into their skills of openness, communication, collaboration and sharing ideas. It is also a time to see if the technical skills of the candidate are appropriate to the needs of the job.

The interviewing process presents not only an opportunity to learn about the potential candidate, but also gives a chance for you to inform the candidate about the organization and his/her potential role in it.

### **3. What does the candidate need to know about the position? What do you need to know about the position?**

The candidate needs to know about the responsibilities that are associated with the job. There are many different subtle parts of a job—decision making, problem solving, working on a team vs. being independent—that should be shared in the interview. The candidate also needs to know what (s)he is expected to produce, how the job is going to fit in with the rest of the organization, and how it will evolve.

You need to know the essential job functions and how they are likely to evolve.

As an individual interviewing a candidate you want to assess how this person will fit into the team they will be joining. You have to know the strengths and needs of that team and to see if the candidate can add strengths to the areas of team weakness.

#### **4. What should you know about the candidate you are interviewing?**

Prior to the interview you need to assess the specific criteria for which you are hiring a person. Most jobs require that a person have the ability to:

- Be a team player
- Have leadership abilities
- Have communication skills
- Perform job functions
- Fit into the culture of the organization
- Value diversity

You are able to explore these requirements by looking at the candidate's past track record. Look at the kinds of jobs (s)he has had, the roles (s)he played in those organizations, how well the work was done. You are looking for dependability, the candidate's willingness to support others, and to be a team player.

#### **5. What do you need to know about yourself as the interviewer?**

There are three essential aspects of who you are that you bring to the interview: values, biases and "gut" feelings. As an interviewer you can not rid yourself of these qualities, but you can be conscious of them. Keep in mind the following advice:

Know your values—

- What are the qualities you value in an employee?
- How do you want to resolve conflict?
- How do you like others to communicate with you?
- How do you prefer to communicate with people?

Know your biases—If you interview a candidate because you want a mirror image of yourself, without taking into consideration the needs of the organization, you need to be aware of that prior to the interview.

What’s behind your “gut feeling”— If you have a “feeling” about this candidate search to find the objective basis for this feeling. You need to be able to substantiate your feeling. At times “gut feelings” can be an expression of personal biases and prejudices.

## **6. What should the interviewer prepare before the interview?**

The best interviews occur when the interviewer is prepared. Here are several steps that need to be followed:

- Prepare questions — do not wait for the person to walk into the interview to decide what you are going to ask him/her.
- Plan your process—determine what steps are involved in this interview process (questions to be asked, what happens after the interview, should the candidate see other people).
- Read the candidate’s resume—incorporate the resume into the interview questions. The resume should not be read during the interview.
- Know the position—be familiar with the position for which you are hiring. Questions that correspond to that position should also be included in the interview.

## **7. What are the steps of the interview process?**

Regard the interview as a conversation between people. Considering the following steps will lead to a rewarding experience for the person being interviewed and the individual(s) leading the interview:

- Put the person at ease—top priority is to create an environment for that interviewee to perform at their best. Let the applicant know your name, and ask how (s)he prefers to be called. Give the candidate some information about the organization.
- Ask questions about their previous position. What they enjoyed. What they added to their team and organization.
- Ask open-ended questions—questions can be short but they should be broad enough to allow the candidate to think and elaborate.
- Ask for contrary information—ask the candidate to explore something that didn’t work well (Tell me about a time when you were a member of a team and the team didn’t function well. What do you think went wrong? How did you respond to that situation?)
- Ask situational questions—pose questions that put the candidate into a problem solving situation or ask questions that are realistic to the job.

(If someone asked you to do a report in three days, and you knew you couldn't get it done, how would you deal with it).

- Ask only job related questions—no questions should be asked that would lead the candidate to believe the decision to hire him/her is based on factors other than job related factors. Questions about the person's age, marital status, number of children, how they would take care of their children should not be asked.

At the end of the interview leave time for the candidate to say anything more about him/herself or ask questions about the work. This is also a time for you to ask any follow-up questions.

### **8. What is the leadership role in beginning employment relationships?**

A leader's role in a beginning employment relationship is to set the tone from the first moment the applicant walks in the door. You want it to be an open, trusting kind of environment where people are communicating. The interview process is the leader's opportunity to convey the organization's values, mission and vision. Treat your candidate as a new customer. If hired they will be your new internal customer.

The interviewer needs to bring to the interview honesty and integrity. You want to create a situation where, regardless of whether the person gets the job, (s)he walks away thinking that this is a great organization.

If hired, you need to consider that this individual is going to change the dynamics of the organization and the team (s)he will be on. No matter how much team building you've done or however well functioning your team is, teams are constantly evolving. Therefore it is the role of the leader to rebuild the team in order for the new person to fit in.

## Part Three: Working with the Material

### Preparing for the Interview

### Handout 6

In the capsule you heard about the importance of being prepared for an interview. Another point you want to consider is that you need to be consistently prepared. This simply means that all candidates should be given equal treatment—the same amount of time for the interview, if possible being interviewed in the same room, by the same people. The checklist below is a guideline for what you will need to have completed and ready for an interview. Add your own ideas to the list.

- 1. Candidate has been notified about the date, time and place of the interview.
- 2. Everyone who will be involved with the interview has been notified. Resume and applications have been sent to other interviewers.
- 3. Support personnel have been notified so that they can make themselves known to the candidate, and make him/her feel welcomed to the organization.
- 4. Interview location is prepared. There is ample room for sitting, paper and pens are available for taking notes.
- 5. Resumes and applications have been read.
- 6. Questions based on the organization's need, the resume, and application are included.
- 7. Criteria for evaluating the answers is discussed by individuals in charge of hiring.
- 8. The name of the candidate can be said correctly.
- 9. If several people are involved in the interview, there is a clear division of responsibilities and each participant knows which questions they will be asking.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

# Developing Questions

# Handout 7

Plato said “The beginning is the most important part of the work.” This is absolutely true when it comes to preparing questions for an interview. There are a number of Do’s and Don’ts for getting ready. Read the list below. Then continue this exercise by developing a few questions that elicit information from the candidate.

## Do’s for Writing Questions

1. Create questions that relate to the skills and knowledge you are looking for in the job.
2. Write questions that reflect the candidate’s past employment. Use information from the candidate’s resume and application to create the questions.
3. Consider transferable skills when writing questions. For example, some women may have limited experience working with an organization, but have considerable managerial skills from their other experiences.
4. Create questions that relate to the individual’s leadership ability and the contributions they can make to a team.
5. Write questions that are probing.

## Don’ts for Developing Interview Questions

1. Don’t use last year’s questions. Consider how the position has changed, how the composition of the team has changed.
2. Don’t write questions that result in “yes” or “no” answers.
3. Beware that hypothetical or prescribed situations may have inherent biases that relate to your organization specifically.
4. Don’t use questions that may challenge the candidate’s sense of loyalty or tact (e.g., “How do you feel about this interview?” “What was the biggest mistake your manager made in your last position?”).
5. Don’t write questions that are extremely broad in nature (e.g., “Tell us why you should be hired for this job.”).
6. Don’t use jargon or “in” language when writing your questions.

## Practice Changing the Questions

## Handout 8

Below are a number of questions. They all have been written incorrectly. They are examples from the “Don’ts” list. Rewrite the questions. The first one is given as an example.

*1. Are you good at resolving conflict?*

“From your past experience, give us an example of a situation that involved conflict? Please tell us how you dealt with this situation.”

*2. Tell us about yourself.*

*3. Describe your greatest strength.*

*4. What’s makes you the best person for this job?*

*5. What would you do if you were asked to double your team’s production outcomes?*

# Communication Guidelines

# Handout 9

When planning for an interview it is very important to consider how people communicate. For the purposes of interviewing there are four guidelines that are important:

- **Communication reflects an individual’s worldview.**

Each person’s life experiences (family, education, religion, language, social background, where they went to school, interests, etc.) help form the way they see and interact with the world. The amazing fact to consider is that there are over five billion of us in the world, and no two of us are alike.

- **Communication is verbal and nonverbal, conscious and unconscious.**

The way that each person speaks and presents him/herself has meaning. Gesture, pauses when speaking, and the way someone dresses, whether it is intended or not, communicates something. Individuals may not share the same meaning during an interaction but messages are being communicated all the time.

- **Communication reflects culture.**

Every person brings his or her culture to the interview. Some cultures use fewer words than others. Some cultures are prone to use metaphors for explaining situations. Some cultures use more gestures than words. Every culture has many communication styles. No generalization can be made about all people within a culture and therefore no generalization can be made about how all people within a culture communicate.

- **All communication is cross-cultural.**

Every time two people communicate, it is a cross-cultural experience. Communication between people of a different race, religion, or sexual orientation is cross-cultural, and communication between people who have different types of jobs is cross-cultural.

*Source: These guidelines were adapted from “Five Principles in Communicating,” by Christine Turkewych and Helena Guerreiro-Klinowski in Intercultural Interviewing (Quebec: International Briefing Associates, 1992).*

## Communication Guidelines

## Handout 9, page 2

- Given the guidelines above how might this advice have impact on the way that you conduct your interviews?
  
- How will knowing about these communication guidelines help you frame your questions differently?
  
- What are some of the aspects of intercultural communication you need to be aware of when interviewing?

# Recognizing Biases

# Handout 10

When interviewing we need to be aware of our personal biases. A working definition of bias is:

*A prejudice, a partiality or favoritism for something.*

We all have biases, but we can all work to lessen or be aware of them. The first step is recognition. When preparing for an interview if we don't go through a process of uncovering our biases we may end up hiring "sameness."

Below is a list of categories in which many of us have a bias or preference. After each of the items write down your thoughts. After completing the list answer the questions posed.

- Clothing styles
- Jewelry
- Nervousness
- People who want flex-time or want to work at home
- Smokers
- Articulation
- Posture
- Interests
- Education
- People who have changed jobs frequently
- Accents
- People who stutter

1. What do your responses say about you and what you are looking for in a candidate?
2. Which of your responses surprised you? Why?
3. How do some of your responses reflect a we/they dichotomy?
4. How many of your responses reflect actual encounters with other people or does your bias reflect the "way you think about" something?
5. What steps will you take to lessen the impact of your biases in the interview process?

# Questions for Watching the Video

# Handout 5

1. How will we be working in the 21st century? And with whom?
2. What is the goal of the interviewing process? What are you trying to learn?
3. What does the candidate need to know about the position? What do you need to know about the position?
4. What should you know about the candidate you are interviewing?
5. What do you need to know about yourself as the interviewer?
6. What should the interviewer prepare before the interview?
7. What are the steps of the interview process?
8. What is the leadership role in beginning employment relationships?

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