

**LEADERS IN THE LAND OF OZ:  
THE MANAGEMENT OF LEADERSHIP IMAGES**

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**Abstract**

As the Wizard of Oz, many business leaders find themselves at increasing geographical, cultural and psychological distance from their followers. Traditionally, the image of a leader in front of his/her followers was transmitted, for the most part, through face-to-face interactions. However, as industries consolidate and growing corporations expand beyond their national borders, there is a raise in communication barriers among business units that now appear more fragmented than any other time in history. The location of business units in countries with different languages and cultural values creates disjointed systems that are difficult to integrate. Thus, the management of leadership images becomes one of the key challenges of business leaders in this century. This paper addresses this question by suggesting a series of techniques that managers could use to map and change the image that others have about them and their organization. To support this presentation, we make use of examples based on our research that has been oriented, for several years now, toward the understanding of the production and consumption of leadership images. These examples of case studies, using fictional names, may show how managers can map out the leadership images of organizational members and leverage these images to facilitate organizational change.

**Keywords**

Leadership, leadership images, semantic networks

## INTRODUCTION

The Wizard of Oz was a strong and charismatic leader acting as the main guardian and defender of the kingdom of Oz from the wicked witches. Oz was a great and terrible wizard who was different things to different people, but he was always a key-integrating figure for the people of Oz. In their journey to meet the Wizard of Oz, Dorothy and her friends met a man who described Oz for them:

- *"Where are you all going?"*
- *"To the Emerald City," said Dorothy, "to see the Great Oz."*
- *"Oh, indeed!" exclaimed the man. "Are you sure that Oz will see you?"*
- *"Why not?" she replied.*
- *"Why, it is said that he never lets anyone come into his presence. I have been to the Emerald City many times, and it is a beautiful and wonderful place; but I have never been permitted to see the Great Oz, nor do I know of any living person who has seen him."*
- *"Does he never go out?" asked the Scarecrow.*
- *"Never. He sits day after day in the great Throne Room of his Palace, and even those who wait upon him do not see him face to face."*
- *"What is he like?" asked the girl.*
- *"That is hard to tell," said the man thoughtfully. "You see, Oz is a Great Wizard, and can take on any form he wishes. So that some say he looks like a bird; and some say he looks like an elephant; and some say he looks like a cat. To others he appears as a beautiful fairy, or a brownie, or in any other form that pleases him. But who the real Oz is, when he is in his own form, no living person can tell."*
- *"That is very strange," said Dorothy, "but we must try, in some way, to see him, or we shall have made our journey for nothing."*

The strength of the Great Oz and the reason he was able to keep the wicked witches at bay, did not reside in his courage, wisdom or even conventional leadership skills, but in his ability to distance and remove himself from his people and lead them through a mediated system of leadership images that duped the senses and allowed Oz to present himself in any shape and form he wanted to his followers. It was a system that created an awesome image of a ruler for the citizens of Emerald City to follow.

## WHY ARE LEADERSHIP IMAGES IMPORTANT?

As the Wizard of Oz, many business leaders find themselves at increasing geographical, cultural and psychological distance from their followers. Traditionally, the image of a leader in front of his/her followers was transmitted, for the most part, through face-to-face interactions. However, as industries consolidate and growing corporations expand beyond their national borders, there is

a raise in communication barriers among business units that now appear more fragmented than any other time in history. The location of business units in countries with different languages and cultural values creates disjointed systems that are difficult to integrate. A shop-floor employee of a successful manufacturing company that was quickly becoming a multinational corporation reflected about the estrangement between management and employees in recent years. He said:

*“People in upper management actually knew your name. The owners would come down and say, ‘Hi Michael, how is your son? I know he had a problem.’ It was a closely held family. Management was friendly. We had family picnics where everybody interacted. We all got to know each other – people in production and people in the office. Now the closest I get to upper management are the monthly columns in the newsletter or the e-mails that his secretary sends every time someone retires”*

Also, as the wizard of OZ, many times leaders have to manage in a business environment that is increasingly mediated . To close the communication gap, organizations make large investments in B2E information technologies to substitute the lack of direct contacts and face-to-face communication. Some of these mediated systems are video conferencing, e-mails, electronic newsletter, the intranet, the internet and even the popular press. For instance, a recent survey by Modalis Research Technologies found that 70% of small- and medium-sized businesses and government or non-profit organizations in North America feel that having an intranet is important, 73% believe it allows for more efficiency in the workplace and 58% currently use e-mail for employee communications. Moreover, they found that 49% of the survey respondents would not mind to include one more layer in the communication process and would prefer to outsource their intranet provider rather than managing it themselves. At the same time, CEOs and top executives see the need to manage their image in the popular press. The shift from Main Street to Wall Street has made us all investors with big stakes in the success or failure of business organizations and hungry for news on our personal wealth. The demand for news has fueled a popular business press that elevates business leaders to celebrity status: heroes and villains in synchrony with the raise and fall of the value of their corporations (Meindl & Thompson. "The Celebrated Leader").

Both, the increasing distance between leaders and followers, the huge investments in information technologies and the rise of the popular business press may take away much of the control that business leaders have over their own image. For instance, *Fortune* magazine publishes regularly rankings of contemporary business leaders, from the most powerful, to the richest, the richest ‘under 40’ and to the worst performers. These leaders now see their images escaping beyond their control and taking on a life of their own in the popular media circuit. This is the case of Donald Burr and People Express. For a number of years Donald Burr was heralded as the David vs Goliath of the airlines industry. During the raise of People Express, he was described as a preacher, a builder, a wizard and a maverick. He became a charismatic figure and popular business icon for entrepreneurs. By the time the company went bankrupt, he was being described as a fallen hero, a spiritual leader with a cult following, and a Quixotic figure in a crusade against the large and evil giants of the airline industry representing the establishment (Chen and Meindl).

Thus, the management of leadership images becomes one of the key challenges of business leaders in this century. Because of the importance of public support and trust in business leaders for the success of their organizations, leaders need to understand the nature of their public images and the dynamics of image production and diffusion. Indeed, the image that people held about their leaders may be more influenced by what others say about them than by what leaders themselves say or do. The interesting question is then how leaders could manage their image. This chapter attempts to begin answer this question by suggesting a series of techniques that managers could use to map and change the image that others have about them and their organization. To support this presentation, we will make use of examples based on our research that has been oriented, for several years now, toward the understanding of the production and consumption of leadership images. These examples of case studies, using fictional names, may show how managers can map out the leadership images of organizational members and leverage these images to facilitate organizational change.

### LEADERSHIP IMAGES

Leadership images are complex and powerful portraits of leaders that serve followers and third party observers to interpret and make sense of leaders' actions. Reality is complicated and often ambiguous; therefore individuals construct mental models or cognitive maps of reality that help them make sense of the events and circumstance surrounding their lives. These mental representations are powerful comprehension tools, imputing order to an otherwise chaotic environment. In organizations, members search for a symbolic order to provide coherence, meaning, continuity and a unified view of the world. In our studies, we have found that at the core of individuals' mental representations of the organization is the concept of leadership. Shils (1965) stated that every society has a symbolic center or centers that serve to anchor the system of values and beliefs governing the social system. In our organizations, leaders are one of these cultural centers. Leaders are romanticized, glorified and elevated to the category of cultural icons that personify key values and beliefs of our organizations and society in general.

What comes to people's minds when they think of their leaders? When we ask this question to followers, they tend to provide descriptions of the leader that include leadership attributes and objects. The attributes describe the persona and style of the leader. It includes attributes such as charismatic, autocratic, participate or emotionally intelligent. This is what we call the *denotative* meaning of leadership and it has already received a great deal of attention in the academic and popular business literatures. There are dozens of leadership styles from task-oriented to transformational leaders. The objects include other people, issues and other general organizational elements. These objects provide the *connotative* meaning of leadership. That is, the meaning associated with leaders by their connections with other organizational concepts that are important to followers such as job security, the future, innovation and change, quality or teamwork. This is what we call the *connotative* meaning of leadership; that is, the meaning of leadership that is given not by 'internal' personal attributes, but rather by the 'external' connections and relationships with other organizational concepts. These concepts are organized in a mental map made of a web of organizational concepts connected directly or indirectly to the concept of leadership. Thus, a leadership image can be described as a mental map made of a web of organizational concepts connected directly or indirectly to the concept of leadership.

Besides the concept of leadership, the basic elements of a leadership image include key people, relevant issues, and a variety of organizational concepts. These elements are organized in a cognitive space forming a web of connections. The distance between of any two objects in the space represents the degree to which the two elements share a similar meaning. For instance, if the concepts of ‘teamwork’ and ‘leadership’ appear together in employees’ mental images of the organization, we could assume that employees have an image of their top management team that is consistent with a new culture of collaboration and communication in the organization. When two concepts are presented frequently in association with one another, they strengthen their relation in people’s minds. During the much publicized antitrust trials of Microsoft for monopolistic practices, Bill Gates orchestrated an intensive public relations campaign to change his image from a techie nerd who became one of the richest person on earth by strong arm tactics and bullying customers and showing no mercy to competitors towards a softer image as a public benefactor, champion of innovation and defender of the American liberties. During the long lasting trial, Bill Gates repeated almost mechanically in the same sentence the concepts of Microsoft, creativity and freedom to innovate to associate himself with society’s values of entrepreneurship and freedom against big government interventionism that curtails innovation.

### **DISCOVERING FOLLOWERS’ LEADERSHIP IMAGES?**

In our research, we have explored the leadership images that emerge in followers’ minds and the media using a set of techniques known as Semantic Network Analysis (SNA). Semantic Network Analysis is a research method useful for identifying the key concepts and describing the relationships among them within messages. There are two general steps in SNA:

**Step 1. Identifying the Concepts of the Leadership Image.** The identification of the concepts of leadership image can be done in a first step with text analysis. For instance, unstructured interviews with followers can provide the raw material to uncover the key elements of the mental image. Followers’ general descriptions of the leader and the organization provide the raw data to extract the basic elements of the leadership images. Language is our window to individuals’ thoughts and mental processes. It is through language that organizational members reveal the culture of the organization and the perceptions that they hold about the different elements of the organization. In general, open-ended interviews for this purposes usually last for more than one hour and subjects are asked very general questions to avoid guiding them in their answers. This procedure should be inductive and free of a priori categories. These are some examples of questions:

- How would you describe the CEO of this company to a newcomer?
- How would you describe the company to a newcomer?
- What would you like to see the company two years from now?
- What are the major issues or topics relating to the company and its employees that you discuss more often with other members of the organization?

A small sample within a population (about 10%) is often enough to generate the majority of sense-making constructs. The interviews can then be transcribed and content analyzed using computer aided tools to identify the most frequently used concepts. Most text analysis programs provide a distribution of the most frequently used words in the text. Several runs of the program may be necessary to ‘clean-up’ the text by using word roots for plurals –

‘compan’ for company and companies, or unifying double names --if people refer to John Smith as ‘John’ and ‘Smith,’ we may want to use ‘JohnSmith’ as just one concept.

**Step 2. Describing the Relationships among Elements of a Leadership Image.** The strength of the relationship between a pair of words is defined as the degree of association between them. The degree of association can be obtained following two different procedures. One technique is to use a software program that locates one of the key words in the text and identifies how many other words fall within a predetermined window in the text around the key concept. This window can be of 5 to 10 words. The number of times that the two words cooccur is taken as a measure of association in the communication message. If we transcribed the interviews, this method can be employed to uncover followers’ leadership images as well as the leadership images embedded in the press media. Articles about the organization and the leader could be analyzed following a SNA procedure to examine the leadership images being projected by the media to general public.

If we want to be more precise and obtain the leadership images held in each individual mind, we can include the most frequently used words associated with the leader in a survey and ask followers to rate the degree of similarity in their minds among all pairs of concepts. The data can then be put into a matrix of concepts-by-concepts that is analyzed with a multidimensional scaling analytical procedure available in various software programs.

The end result is a multidimensional mental map with the concepts located in the space at different distances from one another based on their perceived similarity. As depicted in figures 1 and 2, usually, three dimensions are enough to describe the data. The individual mental maps can also be aggregated at the group level to increase their reliability. Typical studies obtain and compare the mental maps of different subgroups or segments of the population.

An important concept in the leadership image is the concept of ‘myself.’ The position of this concept in the mental map provides critical information about how the employees see themselves in relation to the leadership of the company. The distance between this point and other points in the leadership image represents individuals’ attitudes toward the other elements of the space and it has implications for individuals’ behavior. In particular, the distance between the concept of leadership and the concept of ‘myself’ indicates the degree of identification with the leader and his or her mission and it is a good predictor of commitment and satisfaction with the leader.

With the leadership image in hand, a skilled manager can devise a strategy that plays on the strengths of the shape and content of followers’ leadership images. In the example that we present below, we examined the mental maps of the top management team and a group of shop floor employees during a profound company-wide change.

## **MANAGING LEADERSHIP IMAGES DURING A CHANGE PROCESS:AN EXAMPLE**

In periods of firm-wide change, when it is important to keep people focused on the new vision of the leader, the role of followers’ leadership images becomes especially significant. In a study

conducted in a large manufacturing firm with four operating plants in North America, we used Semantic Network Analysis to examine the leadership images of top managers and production employees during the process of change. The company was transforming itself from a cost-efficient industrial firm to an innovative medical company. The market for industrial products was mature with no expectations for growth because in a few years new technologies for data recording and storage were going to make the highly profitable industrial products obsolete. On the medical side, however, there were high expectations for growth. The basic strategy of change involved a redistribution of resources from the industrial part to the medical side of the business, an important restructuring in the processes with no significant downsizing and a new culture of innovation, risk taking and horizontal communication. An important part of the new strategy was the focus on customer service and the emphasis on manufacturing cells and teamwork. To expand to new international markets in Europe, it was required to be ISO 9000 certification that was being implemented during the time we worked with them.

**The Change Plan.** Since the company was performing well, management wanted to do a smooth transition and did not intend to have a massive downsizing of the industrial side of the business. The plant where we conducted the study had frozen salaries of employees for the last two years as an alternative to a more radical cost-reduction strategy. This was done despite the fact that the average hourly salary in the plant was twice as much as in their other manufacturing plants. The company, however, had very strong ties with the larger community and management did not want to sever these relations. Besides, the industrial side of the business was still very profitable and it would have high margins for several more years. Top management strategy for the industrial part was to freeze new hires, reduce the workforce by attrition, keep ‘milking-the-cow’ for a few more years and, at the same time, initiate the change process towards the booming medical industry where there were more opportunities for growth. Young people could be easily recycled for the new medical production lines.

**The Resistance.** However, the process of change was facing important resistance from shop floor production employees in one of the plants. This plant had the majority of the production lines in the industrial part of the business (90%). However, it was going to become 50% medical in a year period. They believed that management wanted to use the industrial resources to develop the medical business in another plant elsewhere with new people. Then, they will sell the ‘plant piece-by-piece.’ In their minds, any decision by the CEO was clear evidence that the top management team was divesting the company before closing it down. Several employees talked openly about getting unionized and rumors started to spread through the grapevine that management wanted to move the production lines to the south (South Carolina was often mentioned) where labor was less expensive. Some events reinforced their fears. For instance, the outsourcing of the distribution department represented savings of 1 Million dollars and the loss of only four jobs, two of them with early retirement packages. However, the decision created major havoc among production employees. It was clear that the leadership image being held at the shop floor was working throughout the social networks where bottom-up rumors and top-down messages converged to give new meaning to every action of the leader so as to fit the world view that had emerged in the production lines.

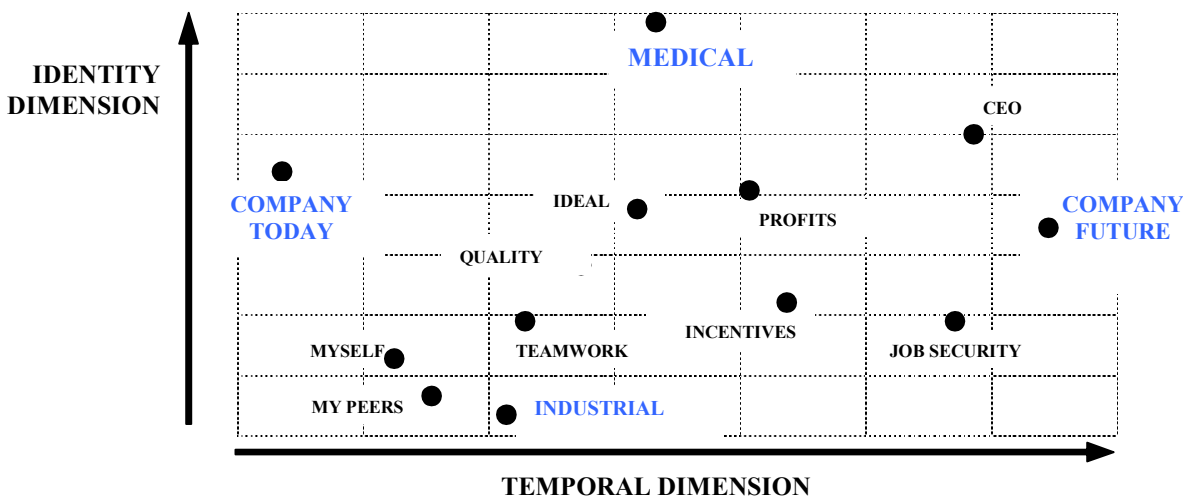
These interpretations occurred despite the constant efforts of top managers to communicate their vision. The CEO held several town meetings and group meetings with employees. Some of these meetings created even more confusion among employees to the frustration of management. In

one occasion, one employee asked in a town meeting if there were going to be more layoffs after the loss of a small department and the CEO said no. A few days later, management closes a deal to sell out another small department with the loss of only one job. The employees perceived that the CEO had not being straightforward with them and from that point his messages were always perceived with a great deal of mistrust.

**Generating the Leadership Image of Production Employees  
Key Concepts.**

The first step was to uncover the key concepts. A text analysis of the interviews with a sample production employees revealed as the key concepts in the group leadership image the concepts of profits, incentives, myself, my peers, quality, teamwork, industrial, medical, company-today, company in the future, ideal company and the CEO. A survey with these thirteen concepts was administered to all production employees asking them to rate the degree of similarity and/or relatedness that they perceived for each pair of concepts. The results of the survey were analyzed with the Galileo program to obtain the multidimensional leadership images of the group of employees. Figure 1 show the leadership image obtained in the production employees and the top management team.

**FIGURE 1.  
LEADERSHIP IMAGE FOR PRODUCTION EMPLOYEES**



**The Map.** The leadership image of production employees at this plant shows that most of the organizational issues and themes relevant to group members are related to the change process. The profound changes in structures and policies as a consequence of the reorientation of its manufacturing focus made the temporal dimension from ‘today’ to the ‘future’ very salient. There was a clear awareness of a major cultural change and that this change represented a mayor



departure from the past. For the first time, their job security was threatened and feelings of insecurity surfaced in the group -will there be layoffs with the reorganization? will I be able to keep my job? On the other hand, the change process was accompanied with the implementation of a Total Quality Program. The company was in the middle of the ISO 9000 certification process that was sold to employees as the key to become more competitive and open new markets in Europe. As a consequence, concepts such as quality and teamwork were omnipresent in wallpapers and posters throughout the organization and became an ordinary part of their lunch conversations in the cafeteria. This leadership image has some features worth noting. First, the elements of the mental map are quite disconnected from one another, indicating that members see the concepts very unrelated from one another. Second, employees view or perceive the leader and his vision according to two main dimensions:

1. *Temporal Dimension.* At the poles of this dimension are the concepts of company-today and company-future.
2. *Identity Dimension.* At the poles of this dimension are the concepts of 'industrial' and 'medical' 'job security.'

The concept of 'myself' is in the periphery of the cognitive space, indicating that members see themselves as very different from the other elements that define the change process. In particular, the concepts of 'myself' and the 'CEO' are in opposite poles showing a lack of trust and commitment in the vision of the top management team and the change process. Finally, the center of the space is defined by the concepts of quality, teamwork, and ideal company. This configuration is consistent with the reports from the interviews that we mentioned above and is a consistent image of the negative attitudes and low morale of the production units within the plant.

### Changing the Leadership Image of Production Employees

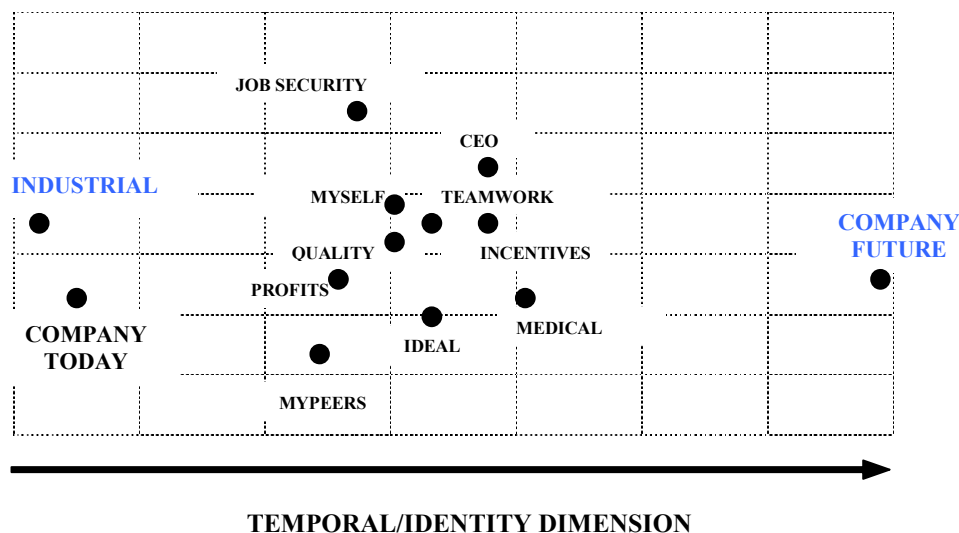
The analysis of leadership images can be used to develop issue management strategies that leverage the shape and content of the leadership image to change followers mental maps and facilitate the change process.

**Base Map.** Figure 1 shows the baseline map for production employees. The leadership image has two main dimensions, a temporal and an identity dimension. Followers are in the periphery of the map (myself and my peers) close to the company today and industrial. They see themselves far away from the future, the CEO and the medical part of the business. The concepts of quality, teamwork, job security, and profits are seen as disconnected and unrelated to one another. The leadership image is consistent with their negative attitudes toward the leadership and the vision of the change program and disbelief in the total quality program to achieve a more competitive organization in the future.

**Target Map.** To change followers' leadership images, we first need a target map that will serve to model employees' mental maps. Because we want employees to focus in the vision developed by the CEO and his team, we use the same questionnaire with all members of the top management team. Figure 2 shows the leadership image of the top management team. The configuration of the leadership image for the top management team is quite different from that of the employees. In this mental map, there is only one main dimension that goes from company-future to company-today/industrial. Consistent with their strategy to focus on medical products, the

mapping of the leadership image of top managers shows the change from industrial to medical. They also see the company-today as very different from their ideal company. It is also interesting to note that they see themselves 'myself' as very central in the cognitive space which is consistent with their position as key decision makers and agents of change in the organization. Another important aspect of the configuration is that most concepts are very close to one another suggesting the belief that all of them are connected and necessary to move the company to the future. The concept of company-future appears very close to key important concepts in the change process, such as teamwork, quality, profits, incentives, and job security.

**FIGURE 2.**  
**LEADERSHIP IMAGE FOR THE TOP MANAGEMENT TEAM**



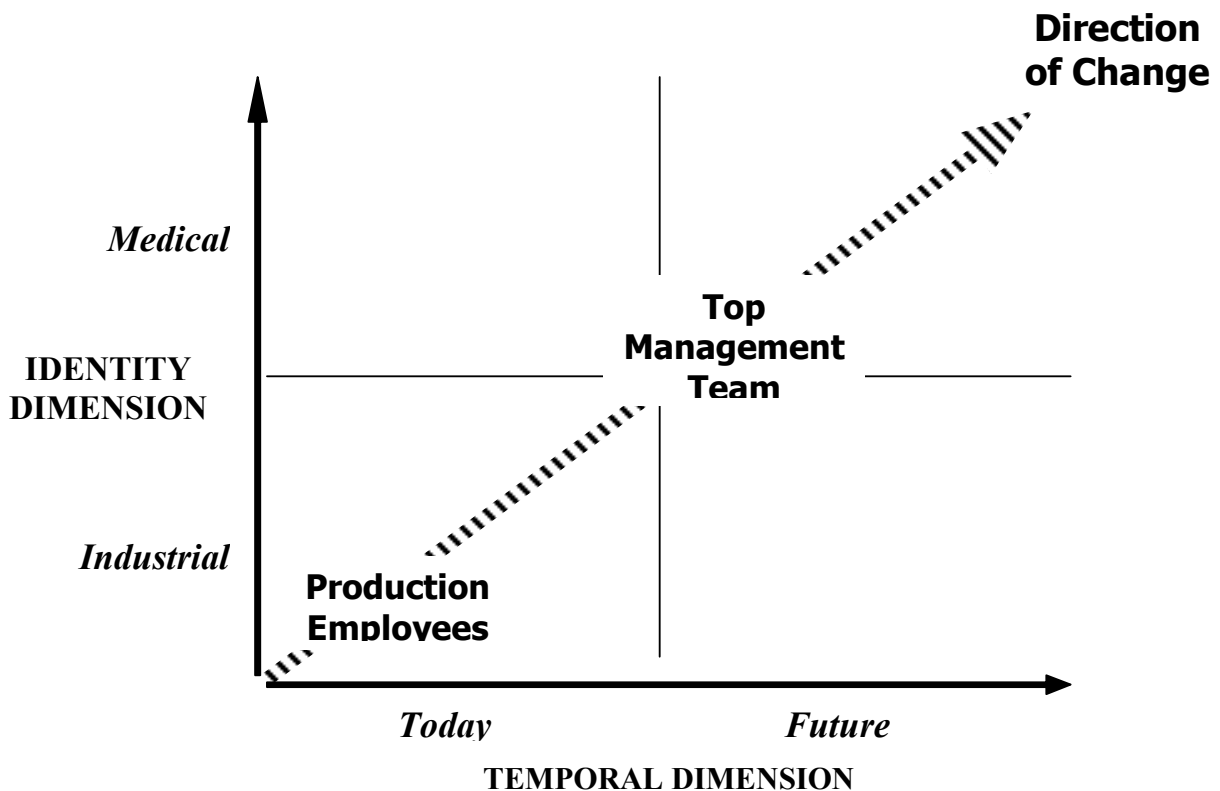
**Alignment through Issue Management.** The next step is to achieve certain degree of alignment between the two leadership images. Figure 3 shows the positioning of production employees and management in the two dimensions of the mental map. While management see themselves in the middle of the change process, production employees are still anchored in the past in the first quadrant. There is a need to close this gap and bring employees' perceptions closer to management's perceptions by focusing on important issues. Here several analytical procedures could be used to devise the optimal strategy to change the position of key concepts within the mental map. In this case, we are interested in moving the concept of myself closer to the future and to the leader. An analytical procedure available in the Galileo software program was used to devise these two strategies of Issue Management (see table 1):

Issue Management 1 (myself-future). The results indicate that to move employees' perceptions and attitudes toward the future, there are 3 key issues -**quality, peers and teamwork** that need to be associated with the concept of myself. By moving the concept of job security closer to these other four concepts, we can reduce the distance between job security and Company-Future by 50%. This would reduce the anxiety and fear of job loss,

which should result in an increase in morale, satisfaction and commitment with the organizational change.

Issue Management 2 (myself-leader). To move employees' perceptions and attitudes toward the leader, there are two key issues -**profits and job security** that need to be associated with the concept of myself. By moving the concept of 'myself' closer to these two concepts, we can reduce the distance between 'myself' and CEO by 49%, with the corresponding increase in commitment and satisfaction with management.

**FIGURE 3**  
**POSITION OF THE CONCEPTS OF 'MYSELF' IN THE LEADERSHIP IMAGES OF PRODUCTION EMPLOYEES AND THE TOP MANAGEMENT TEAM**



**TABLE 1**  
**OPTIMAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING LEADERSHIP**  
**IMAGES IN A MANUFACTURING FIRM**

<b>A) Optimal communication strategies to move the concept of 'myself' toward the concept of CEO.</b>						
Message concepts					% Remaining	Distance remaining
1	MEDICAL	INDUSTRIAL	PROFITS		49.24	3.15
2	COMPANY-FUT	MEDICAL	INDUSTRIAL	PROFITS	51.41	3.29
3	IDEAL COMPA	MEDICAL	INDUSTRIAL	PROFITS	51.82	3.32
4	COMPANY-FUT	INDUSTRIAL	PROFITS	JOB SECURITY	51.99	3.33
5	MEDICAL	INDUSTRIAL	PROFITS	JOB SECURITY	52.02	3.33
6	COMPANY-TOD	COMPANY-FU	PROFITS	JOBSECURITY	52.30	3.35
7	COMPANY-TOD	COMPANY-FU	INDUSTRIAL	PROFITS	52.34	3.35
8	COMPANY-FUT	INDUSTRIAL	PROFITS		52.98	3.39
9	COMPANY-TOD	COMPANY-FUTURE	PROFITS		53.06	3.40
10	COMPANY-TOD	COMPANY-FUTURE	IDEAL		53.32	3.42
<b>B) Optimal communication strategies to move the concept of 'myself' toward the concept of 'company-Future.'</b>						
Message concepts					% Remaining	Distance remaining
1	MEDICAL	MY PEERS	CEO	QUALITY	62.45	3.33
2	MEDICAL	MY PEERS	CEO	TEAMWORK	62.84	3.35
3	MEDICAL	ME	MY PEERS	CEO	63.45	3.38
4	MEDICAL	MY PEERS	CEO		63.48	3.39
5	IDEAL	MEDICAL	MY PEERS	CEO	63.66	3.40
6	MEDICAL	CEO	QUALITY	TEAMWORK	64.04	3.42
7	IDEAL	MEDICAL	MY PEERS	QUALITY	64.10	3.42
8	MEDICAL	CEO	QUALITY		65.32	3.48
9	MEDICAL	MY PEERS	QUALITY		65.33	3.48
10	IDEAL	MEDICAL	CEO	QUALITY	65.41	3.49

## CONCLUSION

Like the Wizard of Oz, many business leaders find themselves at increasing geographical, cultural and psychological distance from their followers. These leaders have to manage in a business environment that is increasingly mediated and that takes away most of the control that business leaders used to have over their own image. In this business environment, leadership images become the key challenge of business leaders in this century. In this chapter, we have provided a set of concepts and tools to help managers mapping and managing the leadership images that followers and third parties observers have about them. The basic elements of the leadership image include key people, relevant issues and a variety of organizational concepts connected to the figure of the leader. To uncover these leadership images, we have described a procedure known as Semantic Network Analysis. This method includes a series of computer-aided procedures for identifying key concepts and their relationships in a mental map. We have also described a procedure for managing followers leadership images that helps to strategize the best communication messages to align followers' mental maps with the vision and goals of the change program.

These are powerful tools that could be used to make organizations more effective. But there is also the risk that they are used to achieve political and personal goals. The Wizard of Oz made people wear green spectacles so they would see every thing in Emerald City of green color, which he thought it would make people happier than the real colors of the city. There is the risk that the large investments in B2E information technologies and the ease with which the media can manipulate leadership images achieve just the opposite of what they are intended to do. Rather than closing the communication barriers in our organizations be put at the disservice of the ultimate stakeholders of our organizations, the employees and society. There is the risk that the rhetoric and substance of leadership may be running increasingly divergent paths and while the leadership image provides readily available myths and symbols for stakeholders consumption, the substance of leadership is hidden behind a curtain like the Wizard of Oz.. There is an important challenge to business leaders and academics to ensure that these technologies are used to increase the effectiveness of our organizations and the well being of all stakeholders involved in the process.