

Building the leadership engine

INSTITUTE DEVELOPS LEADER-TEACHERS IN BAE SYSTEMS-IEWS

What is the result when senior level, world-class business executives become leader-teachers who can develop the leaderability of their direct reports and associates?

According to Associate Professor Carole K. Barnett, the result is “a flowdown of leader capability throughout the company, building a leadership engine that drives everyone’s performance.”

And this is exactly what is happening in one of the most exciting and productive partnerships that currently exists in the Whittemore School—a two-year old relationship with BAE SYSTEMS-IEWS (Information and Electronic Warfare Systems). It is a 5,300 member organization headquartered in Nashua, N.H. Known as Sanders for nearly 50 years, the company was purchased in November 2000 by BAE SYSTEMS, a UK-based global company with nearly 100,000 employees on five continents.

The WSBE-BAE SYSTEMS partnership is built on an executive development program that IEWS named the “Building the Leadership Engine—Executive Institute.”

Academic Director Dr. Carole K. Barnett designed and conducts the three-day course for senior executives at the New England Center. Executives who participate in the program are already accomplished leaders in their business areas—but what about their leadership bench strength? Thus, the superordinate goal of the program is to help them develop their abilities to develop the next generation of leaders in their business areas. Barnett says that the Institute serves as a building block of the company’s leadership engine, driving performance for the long term. That’s a critical capability for a company with well over \$1 billion in annual orders and contracts—some of which—like the Electronic Warfare system for the U.S. Joint Strike Fighter—will be in production for many decades.

Based on best practices and insights presented in *The Leadership Engine: How Winning Companies Build Leaders at Every Level* (1997) and the accompanying pedagogy of Professor Noel Tichy of the University of Michigan Business School, the Executive Institute’s premise is that within all great business leaders—whether they are CEOs, mid-managers, or shop stewards—are great teachers.

In day-long classes, participants first learn both a method and framework for analyzing their inherent leadership philosophies and practices, thereby discovering and articulating their “teachable points of view™.” Then, back home, they use the same method and framework to analyze their direct reports’ leadership principles, guiding them to articulate their own teachable points of view™. The culmination is a much clearer understanding everywhere on “who are we,” “where are we going,” and “how are we going to get there.” Barnett’s challenge is to help participants develop their identities and capabilities as leader-teachers with enormous human capital responsibilities in their business areas.

At BAE SYSTEMS, senior executives, including company President Walter P. Havenstein and many of the 18 vice presidents who report to him, have been involved in teaching segments of the program with Barnett.

“This personalizes the program for the company,” she explains.

“Instead of modeling CEOs from other organizations, participants focus on exemplars among their own cadre of great leaders.”

This year, Barnett is working with a number of BAE SYSTEMS’ senior executives to develop unique 45-minute presentations on their teachable points of view™ as leaders of the company. “The challenge is for them to teach their direct reports in and outside of the classroom how to articulate their own teachable points of view™ as leaders,” Barnett explains.

The Institute is run four times a year. Barnett expects that through the summer of 2003, approximately 150 upper-level executives will have been engaged in the program.



Associate Professor of Management
Carole K. Barnett, Ph.D.

“My key take-aways from this program include: It is important to develop potential leaders in your group; it is more important to develop your leaders to develop leaders.”

—Executive Institute participant