

Opinion

Leaders not ready for messy future



Your Turn
Bob Johansen
Guest columnist

We think we are connected today with the rest of the world with modern technology, but the next 10 years will be a period of dramatically heightened connectivity and upheaval.

In this future world, a path characterized by increasing speed, frequency, scope and scale of disruption will emerge where anything that can be distributed will be distributed.

The shift from centralized to distributed organizations has already begun, but most leaders — and most organizations — aren't ready for it.

Leadership will be much less cen-

tralized and much more distributed. The hierarchical practices of leadership for centralized organizations will be brittle. Firm structures will give way to fluid shape-shifting organizational forms that function like micro-organisms. Enduring leadership qualities like strength, humility and trust will continue to be crucial, but the future will require new literacies for leading in an increasingly frightening and unpredictable world. Disturbingly, terrorists and criminals already make use of shape-shifting organizations better than most of the rest of us.

The disruptions of the next decade will be beyond what many people can handle. Thus, the world will be susceptible to simplistic solutions. This certainty about the future may pro-

vide temporary hope, but it is likely to be false hope since we live in an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world, which the military calls VUCA.

I've been focused on the leadership literacies that will be necessary to thrive in this kind of world. Leaders will see things they have never seen before, and the ones who have the ability to fail gracefully will be rewarded.

Most of today's leaders are best in person, but, in the future, they will not be able to be there in person all the time. Their ability to lead will be reduced dramatically if they cannot continuously feel present even when they are not present. New digital tools will allow leaders to bridge the valley created by their absence and choosing

the right medium will be key.

Leaders will need to provide enough clarity to make disruption tolerable. They need to be very explicit about where they're going, but very flexible about how they'll get there. They will also need to communicate realistic hope through their own stories of clarity as we enter an increasingly turbulent decade.

Futurist Bob Johansen, a distinguished fellow with the Institute for the Future in Silicon Valley, California, will be the keynote speaker March 8 at Securing the Future, an annual conference in Cincinnati for nonprofit leaders. He will address themes from his latest book, "The New Leadership Literacies: Thriving in a Future of Extreme Disruption and Distributed Everything."

Responsible bidder nothing like Jim Crow



Your Turn
Robert E. Richardson Sr.
Guest columnist

The Cincinnati NAACP is compelled to respond to the false and divisive rhetoric authored by John Morris, leader of the anti-inclusion business front group Miami Valley Associated Builders and Contractors. The ABC is a consortium of construction companies organized to put profits over workers and community. This same group recently wrote an op-ed in The

Enquirer comparing the city of Cincinnati's responsible bidder ordinance to "Jim Crow."

The article written by Morris is a thinly veiled attempt to protect contractors doing business with the city from creating career opportunities for the underemployed, disadvantaged and excluded. It is shameful for Morris to evoke the African-American struggle to justify the status quo. It is reprehensible to compare the Jim Crow era of lynching, murdering, brutality and denying equal opportunity to African-Americans with the responsible bidder ordinance. His in-

tent is to distract with offensive and divisive rhetoric, but we want the reader to know the facts.

The responsible bidder ordinance is about our community, our workers and our future. Cincinnati's responsible bidder ordinance rewards contractors that invest in their workforce and local communities. Responsible bidder holds contractors accountable to the taxpayers, incentivizes career training opportunities and, ultimately, will make our workplaces more inclusive and safe.

Apprenticeship programs in Ohio, which qualify under the responsible

bidder ordinance, have 70 percent more participants of diverse backgrounds and 80 percent more women.

We encourage Morris, the ABC board of directors and its sponsors to truly engage, join in the fight for equality, justice, improved police-community relations, improving the educational system and work to bring our communities together. We at the Cincinnati NAACP want equity, and we work to fulfill these goals every day. We invite you to join us.

Robert E. Richardson Sr. is president of the Cincinnati Branch of the NAACP.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Graham's devotion resonated

I was saddened and angered by the pseudo-intellectual column written by George Will in the Saturday Enquirer, denigrating Graham while elevating the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Pope John Paul II to the position of "20th Century's two greatest religious leaders."

I would argue that Graham's greatness comes not from his popularity, but from his immaculate lifestyle, devotion to his God and legacy of worldwide compassion, which continues to grow.

Mary-Alice Helms,
Brookville

Should we re-evaluate the voting age next?

Now that it seems that many are on board with the idea that anyone under age 21 should not be allowed to purchase a firearm, we might ask what such a law or policy implies. Obviously, it implies that no one under 21 can be trusted to use a firearm responsibly. Yet, as a country, we are perfectly willing to allow an 18-year-old, just out of high school, to join the Army and be trained to kill people using real assault weapons (i.e. fully automatic with large capacity magazines) and other types of weapons.

We will ship that person off to Iraq or Afghanistan, where we will expect him to exercise mature responsibility for protecting not only his life, but the lives of his comrades-in-arms, the civilians in the country and even, to some extent, the enemy he faces.

If he comes back to the U.S. on leave and tries to purchase a firearm, he will be denied that right because he is not yet 21. Strange country we live in. While we're at it, why would we even let a person so irresponsible exercise such an awesome responsibility as voting. Perhaps we need to rethink that one, too.

Ronald Meyer, Amberley Village

Don't knock Pureval for years of service

Ohio state Sen. Lou Terhar sure was condescending on his opinion piece on Aftab Pureval ("Uninformed Pureval needs to do homework, history lesson" Feb. 26)!

Pureval's main fault, per Terhar, seems to be where he was born and where he's lived. He has not lived until recently in the 1st Congressional District, which we all know is the center

of the universe. Terhar's atlas is geographically incorrect. Sounds like us-versus-them mentality: We are superior because we've lived here longer. Ironic because new blood is needed in Congress.

Please don't knock Pureval for his length of service. Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel is an excellent example of a man who switches his government jobs more frequently than his home AC filter.

It is great the feds have agreed to chip in for bridge replacements. But where is the state and or local commitment to these projects? Will it take us 10 years to get the green light on the Brent Spence Bridge and Western Hills Viaduct? And then how much longer to build it? Politico types, please don't pat yourselves on the back for securing the first step to infrastructure improvements.

Cheryl D. Spencer, Sycamore Twp.