THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF THE STRATEGIC LEADER: WHAT EFFECTIVE CEOs
DO, HOW THEY DO IT AND AN EXPLORATION INTO HOW THEY THINK ABOUT IT

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to study the lived experience of being a strategic leader, described as the black box of leadership, and to extend the limited research in this field. The researcher utilised the qualitative ethnographic methodology of direct observation, observing 138 discrete critical incidents that made up the lived experience of the five strategic leaders in the sample. The researcher further utilised observation tools from the field of Neuro Linguistic Programming, personal experiences, metaphors, allegories, analogies as well as deep personal introspection to make sense of the lived experience of the five CEOs.

The primary research objective was to answer the question: What do CEOs do and how do they do it? A further related objective was to explore how they think about what they do.

The research answered these questions by prising open the 'black box' of the lived experience of the strategic leader. The result of the research is the pure leadership spider web model. The pure leadership spider web model breaks down the lived experience of the strategic leader, the content of the black box, into eight dimensions: the pillars that make up the personal leadership philosophy; emotional states of mind brought to bear in meetings; kinaesthetic patterns used during meetings; meeting dynamics; emotional states brought to bear on day-to-day shop-floor engagement; emotional states brought to bear on leadership engagement sessions with other like business leaders; frames of mind governing the day-to-day experiences; and The Magic Language Box.

Key terms:

black box of leadership; strategic leader; strategic leadership; lived experience; chief executive officer; ethnography; ethnomethodology; ,magic language box; neuro linguistic programming; qualitative methodology; leadership development; meta-programs; meta-states; complete observation; pure leadership spider-web model; metaphors; personal leadership philosophy; kinesthetic; subjective experience

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Glossary and terms

Strategic leader refers to the executive with overall responsibility and accountability for the organisation; according to Cannella Jr. and Monroe (1997) this is the individual at the apex of an organisation.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in this research refers to the strategic leader.

Strategic Leadership refers to the process of being a strategic leader. Glenn (2001) argued that strategic leadership was the ability to maintain short-term financial viability while influencing others for long-term viability.

Black Box   With any airplane crash, there are many unanswered questions as to what brought the plane down. Investigators turn to the aircraft's flight data recorder (FDR) and cockpit voice recorder (CVR), which provide investigators with clues as to what caused the crash

Lived Experience (Sandberg, 2005) explained this as a description of what actually happens in practice i.e., the experience of living something.

The Black Box of Leadership. This research identified the lived experience of being a strategic leader as a black box that had not being previously studied; the research sought to prise open the black box and to understand the lived experience therein.

Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) is the study of human subjectivity and human excellence. The term 'Neuro-Linguistic Programming' denotes a set of models and principles meant to explore how mind and neurology (*neuro*), language patterns (*linguistic*), and the organisation of human perception and cognition into systemic patterns (*programming*) interact to create subjective reality and human behaviours. The researcher undertook NLP training at two levels: the entry level Practitioner course and the advanced Master Practitioner course.

The use of 'I' vs. 'The Researcher' in writing. The qualitative nature of ethnography obviously makes it difficult to always speak in the objective third person. In this research and in the writing up, it was more useful and meaningful at times, to use the 'I' person and in others the more objective reference to 'the researcher'. The reader is encouraged

to bear this in mind. It is also expected that the reader will gain the same sense and depth of meaning from the different use of the terms. Ethnography and qualitative research are often highly subjective in writing and reporting.

Sandberg (1994, 1995) argued that the researcher consciously maintains interpretive awareness throughout the research process in that he or she explicitly deals with his or her subjectivity at all times. Tedlock (2000: 471) states that "the shift from an objectifying methodology to an intersubjective methodology entails a representational transformation" and "an ethnographer can allow both self and other to appear together within a single narrative that carries a multiplicity of dialoguing voices." In my (this researcher's) experience of writing up my fieldwork I have found it more meaningful at times to write in a first-person mode.

Leadership Philosophy refers to what the leaders described as their own authentic way of living the experience of strategic leadership; in their own words they described what the researcher ultimately termed the personal leadership philosophy.

The pure leadership spider web model is the framework composed of eight distinct themes that are the core of the results of this study. The spider web refers to what the leaders were observed to do in practice, which is spin a web around their organisations, primarily utilising the eight dimensions of the model.

The Magic Language Box refers to how the leaders make use of language to create a magical experience akin to what the researcher experienced during a live stage show.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

What do strategic leaders do as they lead successful organisations? How do they do it? How do they think about what they do? These questions have occupied my thinking constantly for the five years of my doctoral research. Many people have little doubt that leadership is a real, and indeed significant phenomenon in the large majority of organisations (Alvesson and Sveningsson 2003), and many academic researchers have focused their attention on the study of this phenomenon.

The subject of leadership has attracted huge interest over the years. Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) stated that the resultant massive body of literature on the subject generated confidence in the existence and study of the phenomenon, but that there was considerable discontent with the results of studies so far. Moreover, the academic world still did not demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

There has been little agreement among researchers on the difference between leadership and leadership of organisations (also called executive leadership or strategic leadership). One of the difficulties is whether leadership is to be seen as concentrated in one individual, or distributed over a broad base of individuals in an organisation involved in strategy (Davies and Davies 2004). Storey (2005) argued that leadership in organisations referred to team leadership, while leadership of organisations referred to the overall strategic leadership of the organisation, including structure.

Significantly, less than five percent of current leadership literature has been focused on executive leadership, or the leadership of organisations (Zaccaro and Horn, 2003). Within the five percent, the usage of the terms leader, strategic leader, executive leader or chief executive officer specifically relates to the leadership of a corporate organisation. This research is directed specifically at the executive leader in charge of an organisation: in designing the research this way, the researcher was able to avoid the extant lack of focus in strategic research.

Acclaimed Upper Echelons Theory researchers Hambrick and Finkelstein 1996, focused on the demographic perspective of strategic leadership, but did very little related to or responding to traditional research on leadership.

1.2 Problem statement

This study looks at what the executive leader of a successful corporate organisation does. It seeks to understand the phenomenon and the lived experience of such a leader. The purpose of the research is not to test a substantive theory of leadership but to develop deeper insight into the substantive issue by using a qualitative approach, and, in so doing, produce deep knowledge of the issue. An additional goal is to reveal the unconscious mental frames of successful leaders. These mental frames help uncover how leaders think the way they do by focusing on how they function in terms of cognitive processing (thinking), emoting, speaking (languaging the self and others) and behaving (responding, relating). Mental frames allow the discovery not of what people are, but how they work in a given situation (Bodenhamer and Hall, 2000).

The literature on strategic leadership is sparse, and those who do write about it describe it as a relatively understudied phenomenon (Storey, 2005). In a commentary on management research over the preceding 15 years, Mintzberg (1990) expressed his disappointment that research had not stimulated new thinking, and that what was available was superficial and pedestrian, leaving the academic world still grossly ignorant about a manager's real-life dynamics and challenges, and the content of a strategic leader's job.

Thus, while a good deal has been written about leadership in general, there has been little available on strategic leaders and what they actually do. When strategic leadership has been examined it has been with a focus on top management teams and the Upper Echelons Theory, as evidenced in the work of Hambrick and Mason (1984) Hambrick and Finkelstein (1996).

This researcher notes further that the existing body of literature on leaders and leadership focuses on stylistic and heroic issues as opposed to the lived experience of reality - that is, what actually is done in practice (Sandberg, 2005). Sandberg (2005) stated that researching an

individual or group's lived experience of reality was the primary focus of the interpretive research tradition. In other words, the lived experience, grounded in the phenomenological idea of life-world, was the principal focus of the research. "The idea of life-world expresses that person and world are inextricably related through the person's lived experience of the world" (Sandberg, 2005: p47). The primary object of this thesis is to research the leadership phenomenon, the lived experience, of the strategic leaders.

The leadership phenomenon here refers to each strategic leader's subjective experience of reality in an inter-subjective world. The strategic leader shares the world with other people, and through interaction with them, makes his or her own sense of it. This is his or her subjective experience. The subjective experience of the leader is not independent from the greater world; its quality is greater than the shared meaning between leader and follower. Life-world implies that there is a larger world (more people) out there where meaning is created from other interactions independent of the leader (Sandberg, 2005).

Using the metaphor of the process of investigating a modern jet aircraft crash to symbolize the extent of study to date of the phenomenon of leadership in general and leadership of organisations (strategic leadership) in particular, it appears that there is abundant research on the understanding of the functions of the crashed aircraft as a whole, but almost none of what is in the black box, which contains a true and accurate data and voice record of the crash from the firsthand perspective of the captain (CEO) and cockpit crew. In response to this identified need, in seeking to prise open the black box, the proposed research focuses on understanding what the leader of the organisation, the strategic leader, really does, and produces propositions that set out to answer the questions at the heart of the research objective: What do effective CEOs do? How do they do it? How do they think about it?

The researcher attempts to understand the phenomenon of the effective strategic leader in the automotive retail industry, with effectiveness being the ability to consistently deliver positive, sustainable, measurable financial results as measured by financial performance benchmarks used by the South African automotive retail industry.

This research is ethnographic in its methodology, and thus alterable and fluid in character. It does not aim to produce a theory itself (Van Maanen, 1983) rather, its objective is to generate propositions which may then lead to hypothesis formulation about the leadership phenomenon (Conger, 1988).

Because this research is based on a phenomenon that is understudied, inadequately explained and poorly understood, it is impossible to speculate on relationships among existing variables (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2004).It is also inappropriate to use existing hypotheses, because the research's qualitative observations may generate unexpected phenomena which will form the basis of new hypotheses (Lundberg, 1976).

1.3 Background

The sheer volume of research and theory produced during the study of leadership over decades is testimony to its importance and prominence in the collective effort to understand and improve organisations (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003). Even so, and despite the fact that researchers agree that leadership is a real phenomenon in organisations, a uniform understanding of leadership has remained elusive. Numerous and diverse definitions have been proffered by researchers and there seems to be general consensus that leadership involves a process of influencing behaviour and the achievement of desired outcomes (Yukl, 1989; Bush and Glover, 2003). Beyond this, however, the understanding of the subject remains very shallow (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003).

Storey (2005) argued that despite the fact that the constitution of leadership still needed to be adequately debated, tested and scrutinised, it had become an antidote for all manner of problems within organisations. Storey (2005) also observed that most textbooks on the subject did not clearly delineate between leadership at various levels, leadership of organisations, and leadership within organisations. This, despite the fact that some themes, such as leader-member exchange and situational theory, for example, were clearly suited for, say, executive leadership.

The lack of focus in leadership research was attributed to this lack of delineation between levels (Storey, 2005). It has also been argued that while there had been a massive growth in leadership-orientated research activity, little of this had been directed at the top level with most research concentrating on the middle and junior levels (Storey, 2005). The overwhelming focus on lower-level leadership in the various studies was confirmed by other researchers (Day and Lord, 1998).

Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) pointed out that different groups ascribed a different meaning and value to the term leadership: what the military accepted as leadership, for example, was different from a religious organisation's accepted definition.

Missing from the huge amount of current leadership literature is evidence of leadership development models (Lord and Hall, 2005). Their absence led to the belief that leadership skills are overt behavioural styles and can be taught to people in short behavioural style training sessions. There is also the argument that leadership typically involves a more complex mix of behavioural, cognitive and social skills that may develop at different rates and require different learning experiences (Day and Halpin, 2004; Mumford, Zacarro, Harding, Jacobs, and Fleishman, 2000; Zacarro and Klimoski, 2001).

Historical and recent treatments of leadership have taken a trait perspective. Traits are typically seen as stable constructs rather than skills that need to be developed, which furthers the argument that it is a matter of fortune at birth whether one has or does not have the skills to be considered a great leader. The trait perspective is based on evidence showing consistent associations of specific traits with leadership emergence and perceptions (Judge and Bono, 2000).

Mainstream leadership theory and research attempted to answer the fundamental question of what makes an effective leader. However, a subsequent examination of trait and contingent theory only led to the production of inconclusive and often contradictory results (Bresnen, 1995; Stodgill, 1974; Yukl, 1981; Bryman, 1986).

Charismatic and transformational leadership theories followed, with their emphasis on the personality of the leader. Conger (1999) identified three dominant charismatic and transformational leadership models, which defined leader behaviours: transformational leadership (Avolio, 1999; Avolio and Bass, 2002; Bass, 1985, 1990; Bass and Avolio 1990, 1993, 1994; Bass, Avolio, Goodheim, 1987); behavioural model (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Conger, 1998); and charismatic leadership (House and Shamir, 1993). He argued, however, that there was considerable and growing overlap and a possible convergence among them.

In real-life practice, leaders have been seen to find great difficulty in expressing exactly what they do that makes up leadership. While leaders have been found to be able to define leadership along generally accepted terms, what they did in practice tended to differ significantly from what they said they did (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003). This led the latter researchers to argue that it was not practical or possibly useful to seek or attain a common definition of leadership, empirically or theoretically.

The numerous definitions of leadership and the difficulty associated with enumerating one's understanding of the same led to Alvesson and Sveningsson's 2003 article, "The great disappearing act: difficulties in doing leadership". They identified the fact that in real life leaders tended to say one thing and do another; they tended to articulate a future direction, and then act vaguely and contradictorily in its pursuit. Surprisingly, and contrary to what most authors on leadership expected or proposed, Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) argued that leaders generally delegated the influencing process to someone else. Their overall impression was that on the whole, it was difficult to argue for the possible existence of leadership in organisations.

Abell (2006) explained that a look into the future would lead to a new definition of leadership that stretched beyond the concept of people leadership. This change would be driven by the increasing congruence of strategy and leadership in practice.
The new definition would encompass a strategic agenda that had both an internal and external focus, and was underpinned by a quest for action and results.

1.4 Strategic leadership

As this researcher has already observed, there is little research available on the lived experience of CEOs that offers a thick description of what effective leaders actually do, and them making sense of what they do. The few existing studies focus on executive leaders strategising (Samra-Fredericks, 2003) or attempt to establish a link between CEO charisma and performance (Tosi, Misangyi, Fanelli, Waldman and Yammarino, 2004).

Davies and Davies (2004) defined strategic leaders as people who are insightful, dissatisfied with the present, able to think strategically, action-orientated, and able to align people and organisations behind the vision. Nevertheless, the researchers held that isolating the strategic elements of good leadership posed great difficulty. Strategic leadership has also been argued to be a responsibility and reflection of top management teams (Hambrick and Mason, 1984). Hambrick (1989) posited, however, that strategic leadership only becomes relevant in ambiguous, complex environments that called for the effective processing of high levels of information.

Abell (2006) argued for the importance of strategic leadership that moved a company into the future in a world driven by significant change. He also argued that a key role of this type of leadership was the creation of systems in organisations that allowed decentralised leadership to flourish.

Khurana (2002) in turn recognised that while many people saw leadership as the secret of a successful CEO, the word most frequently used to describe the qualities of an effective leader was charisma. Significantly, Tosi et al. (2004) found that the attribution of charisma was driven primarily by observations by the popular press and some academics, and not by empirical evidence. The researchers claimed further that charismatic CEOs did not have an impact on any indicator of firm performance beyond their own packages and stock prices. Charisma was therefore, not found by Tosi et al. (2004) to be a prerequisite for CEO success.

Finally, the relationship between transactional and charismatic CEO leadership and financial performance in 48 Fortune 500 firms was examined by Waldman, Ramirez, House, and Puranam

(2001). They discovered that perceived charisma was only minimally linked to performance, but that under conditions of uncertainty this association was more significant.

1.5 Design of the study

Research design is concerned with how the study will be structured, what data collections tools will be employed, how the interpretation of the data from the fieldwork will be carried out and what skills will be brought to bear on the study as the researcher moves from his or her own paradigm to the empirical world (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

The epistemological position of the present study is interpretivism. Bryman (2004a: p12) sees interpretivism as "predicated upon the view that a research strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action. Its intellectual heritage includes Weber's notion of Verstehen; the hermeneutic[1] phenomenological tradition; and symbolic interactionism".

Given the black box nature of strategic leadership, this study is concerned with the questions of how CEOs make sense of the world around them and how they undertake the CEO role (the lived experience).

The choice of research methodology has a significant influence on the kind of results generated. In a leadership study it is critical, therefore, that the researcher is clear about what it is he or she is focusing on before a decision on methodology is taken. Different research methods have led to different definitions of leadership found in literature today. It is possible that any instance of a person influencing another, or a group of people influencing another group of people, can be seen as leadership or not leadership depending on the definition applied (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003). Furthermore, quantitative research methods such as questionnaires, will produce indications of leadership or even a strong case for leadership that are different from the

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[1] A term that is drawn from theology and that, when imported into the social sciences, is concerned with the theory and method of interpretation of human action (Bryman, 2004: 13.).

outcome arrived at by qualitative or interpretative research. Qualitative research allows for alternative interpretations of the results, which may be more useful than leader-focused quantitative tools such as questionnaires.

A researcher needs to be careful not to build into the methodology assumptions that he or she personally holds true. If a foregone conclusion that leadership exists is subconsciously built into a questionnaire, results confirming the existence of leadership will necessarily be produced. The challenge for researchers is to build in self-reflexivity, and a deeper and more questioning thinking process when designing research (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000; Alvesson and Sveningsson 2003).

The researcher's paradigm in developing the methodology has a significant impact on the results that are produced. For example, discourse and conversation analysts have paid strict attention to the details of language (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Silverman, 1993) in a bid to appear objective, while on the other hand, some conventional qualitative researchers have subjectively selected, edited and used material that supports specific points they wanted to make.

With this argument in mind Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003: p378) recommend "an approach in which some exploration in depth of what people mean, combined with a considerable openness for – without a privileging of – incoherence, variation, and fragmentation is utilized. Here we recommend ethnographies. Otherwise, leadership research too easily encourages a recycling of versions of the broadly shared discourses on leadership and takes the existence of this phenomenon as both for granted and very difficult to unpack."

Ethnography is the primary data collection strategy used in this research, utilising the following multiple methods for collecting empirical materials (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994):
1. the use of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) as an observation tool;
2. observation (of subjects performing during identified critical events);
3. conversation analysis;
4. structured interviewing;

5. analysis of documents (diaries);
6. post-diary analysis observations;
7. personal observation of group leadership sessions;
8. videotaped interview sessions of leaders responding to a meta-program questionnaire derived from NLP.

In summary, the approach taken in this research is that of an ethnographic field study that uses multi-data collection strategies, and draws together the ethnographic and ethnomethodolological/conversation analytical traditions. The latter, enables a more in-depth exploration of the lived experience of strategic leadership (Samra-Fredericks, 2003). The in-depth exploration will be facilitated by the use of language and narrative, the dynamics of social interaction, the researcher's personal experience of the phenomena being studied, and ethnography's ability to take account of local context.

Current literature provides very few studies of strategic leaders' talk-based interaction, even though observation of these leaders at work reveals that talk plays a central role in what is accomplished (Mintzberg, 1973; Alvesson and Karreman, 2000b; Samra-Fredericks, 2003).

This research does not draw upon a specific intellectual infrastructure, ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967) or conversation analysis (Sacks, 1992), nor does it seek to undertake a systematic and fine-grained analysis, which provides for scrutiny of strategists' linguistic skills and forms of knowledge for accomplishing strategic direction. Rather, it chooses to take the middle road in language use in qualitative research, thereby creating what Samra-Fredericks (2003: p141) calls "ethnomethodologically informed ethnography", where "ethnography is premised upon close-up observation of naturally occurring routines over time/ space dimensions and ethnomethodology/ conversation analysis, upon a study of people's practices and inherent tacit 'methods' for doing social and political life, much of which is accomplished through talk".

One of the chief reasons for choosing the middle road as described by Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003), is to steer clear of the practical challenges which would arise from extended

periods of fieldwork, and the potential generation of massive volumes of transcript that accompany fine-grained conversational analysis - a problem that continually confronts organisation/ management scholars (Alvesson, 1996). Descriptive accounts drawn from the ethnographic fieldwork are included where necessary, and solely to note and explain the findings.

Researching the lived experience of the strategic leader posed a challenge for this researcher, who questioned how one can effectively observe lived experience. The researcher found the solution in NLP. NLP proved the most practical tool for the observation of how the executive leader lived the experience of leadership as well as how each thought about what they did.

The three words that make up the term Neuro Linguistic Programming provide a clue to understanding the technology: the word neuro refers to an understanding of the brain and its functioning; while linguistic relates to the communication aspects (both verbal and non-verbal) of information processing; and programming refers to people's behavioural and thinking patterns.

A relationship exists between perceptions, thinking and behaviour that is neuro-linguistic in nature. The relationship operates all the time, no matter what a person is doing, and it can be studied by exploring the person's internal or subjective experience.

The formal definition of Neuro Linguistic Programming is thus the study of the structure of subjective experience. It is the process of gathering of information so as to make models based on the internal experience and information-processing of the people being studied and modelled, and including the processes that is outside of their conscious awareness (Bandler and Grinder, 1979, 1983). NLP argues that the structure of an experience remains the same, although the content may change. In modelling or discovering how a person creates a speech block, the NLP practitioner employs precisely the same tools that are used when the thinking patterns of successful managers are analysed.

NLP, therefore, provides the ethnographic researcher with several models with which to discover the how of any behaviour. The use of the NLP meta-program questionnaire provided the

researcher with a tool to understanding the common thinking patterns of the five strategic leaders and in so doing answering that part of the research question that sought to find out how strategic leaders think about what they do.

1.6 Time in the field

The researcher is constrained in terms of the amount of time available for academic research and fieldwork, the availability of budget, and access to the sample. In response to the demand for time spent in the field, the researcher can adopt one or a combination of approaches in ethnographic research: the compressed time mode, the selective intermittent mode and the recurrent time mode (Jeffrey and Troman, 2004).

The time deemed necessary for the research is usually designated in the research design, although the actual time spent on fieldwork and the frequency with which researchers visit sites only unfolds during the course of the fieldwork. The key determinant of time in the field is whether saturation or thick description has been reached in the analysis of the decision categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

This research used a combination of all three time modes, as dictated by the availability of executive leaders, the need for additional observations of emerging themes, and the necessity of repeated observation in pursuit of thick description. The need to identify critical incidents for this research was driven by the fact that both the researcher and the study sample faced severe time and cost constraints in the form of time away from income-earning activities and time away from core business respectively.

The researcher attempting ethnography with strategic leaders is challenged greatly by the problem of access. Once access is granted, it is never constant or continual, and the researcher has to adapt to the dynamics of the sample's real-life use of time, a given side-effect of the observation of natural actions (Samra-Fredericks, 2003).
The data collection for this current study called for intimate access to the CEO, which was very difficult, given the nature of CEO's position. Permission was granted by executive leaders of five

companies within the automotive retail industry, thanks primarily to highly credible personal introductions and a powerful motivation for the industry's need for such a study. This motivation was presented by a well-respected leader within the industry who is one of the researcher's personal mentor. It is unlikely that cold approaches to each of the leaders would have resulted in the granting of access.

1.7 Contributions and significance of the research

A review of the current literature on leadership reveals several knowledge gaps that this research sought to fill.

1.7.1 Empirical evidence of what effective strategic leaders do

This research set out to investigate the lived experience of CEOs who have demonstrated effective performance within the automotive retail industry over a period of at least three to five years; performance as measured by 18 financial performance metrics generally accepted in the industry as performance benchmarks. The research methodology, ethnography, was selected as it is best suited to provide empirical evidence of the phenomenon been studied. It has been argued that the extent to which organisational performance and outcomes have been attributed to executives is a direct consequence of the absence of relevant information. The absence of information has led to some researchers emphasising its importance, and others downplaying it. (Meindl, Ehrlich, and Dukerich, 1985; Pfeffer, 1977; House and Aditya, 1997; Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003). This research has provided empirical information of what top executives do.

1.7.2 The need for empirical work on strategic leadership

There also exists a need to fill the knowledge gap in leadership with empirical work on strategic leadership (Glenn, 2001). This research has provided data that will enable future researchers to draw assumptions about different characteristics of strategic leaders within the study of leadership as a whole.

1.7.3 Empirical evidence of strategic leaders in an African context

By focusing on strategic leaders within an African context, this research has provided new insights, different from those of the traditional study of American males (House and Aditya, 1997) which have failed to accurately reflect the complexities of leadership and management in developing economies.

1.7.4 New thinking on strategic leadership

Henry Mintzberg (1990) lamented the lack of new efforts in research and pointed out that most research was simply a replication of earlier studies. This research into the lived experience of the strategic leader has, by virtue of the methodology employed provided new, refreshing insight and knowledge into this level of leadership.

1.7.5 Insight into the lived experience of the strategic leader

This research set out to provide empirical evidence of the lived experience of successful strategic leaders. It has added to the knowledge of strategic leadership by studying what actually happens in practice. Future researchers will be able to use these findings in their work on executive leadership and organisational performance.

The value of this research lies is in its intrinsic focus on the strategic leader and what that leader actually does in practice. The study has produced sorely-needed practical knowledge about the strategic leader, and will possibly turn the tide with respect to the general discontent with research results to date (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003.)

1.8 Limitations of the research

The research limitations set out below have been identified as having implications for the extent to which findings can be generalised:

- The sample of strategic leaders was deliberately restricted to one industry, the automotive retail industry in South Africa, in order to eliminate variables that would make comparative analysis difficult due to industry and country differences, and in order to obtain a consistent clear definition of CEO effectiveness.

- The sample size of five could be argued as been small, however, the amount of quality time and multiple data collection strategies resulted in an in-depth understanding of each strategic leader.

- The issue of access to strategic leaders needs to be highlighted here; access to strategic leaders is extremely difficult to obtain. The difficulty in attributing responsibility for organisational performance to executives was seen to be a direct result of the general inaccessibility of the top executive (Yukl, 2002). Although access was slow and difficult in the early days of fieldwork, this researcher was privileged to obtain it throughout the duration of the study until enough data and raw materials had been gathered to reach thick description. As the study came to an end, from his new vantage point of been a senior manager in an organisation, with regular exposure to the strategic leader, the researcher appreciated even more the inherent difficulty of obtaining access, for research purposes, to the CEO.

- A perceived limitation could be the resultant geographic restriction of the study to the Gauteng region, the economic hub of South Africa. This restriction, however, was not conscious but due to the fact that the financially based criteria for selecting successful strategic leaders led to a selection of leaders in the one major economic hub. A key benefit of this perceived limitation was the alleviation of pressure on the researcher's time and budget as there was minimal travel required to other cities further afield.

- There are no female or black leaders in the sample due to multivariate historic factors. The leadership of the automotive retail industry in South Africa does not have significant representation in terms of females or blacks. Gender and racial backgrounds may, or may not, have had a direct impact on the nature of the results. In the absence of any study, it is impossible to come to any conclusion in this regard. This lack of diversity may possibly have led to the lack of uniquely South African/ African strategic leader behaviours. Different racial backgrounds, also infer different cultural backgrounds which may or may not have an impact on whether a strategic leader is successful. Kets de Vries (2004) pointed out that unlocking and understanding the link between leadership and culture was a complex undertaking, but that this link was relevant. Having said this,

to the extent that white males continue to dominate top management in South Africa, it is difficult to find a significant number of females or black males at the strategic leader level within the same industry.

- The age of the leaders in the sample is another limitation. All the strategic leaders were middle-aged. This is a period when executives are most prone to depression (Kets de Vries, 2004), as a sense of desperation arises when that life's goals are unlikely to be met. This sense of desperation and depression is fought by a level of hyperactivity and action that may fuel high levels of corporate success. Future research may want to contrast successful leaders from different age groups, although given the experience required to be a CEO, finding younger respondents may not be possible.

- As a black researcher, from a foreign country, the researcher was unable to quantify the impact his nationality and race may have had either on the executive leaders or on their followers in the observation settings. The researcher did not, discern at anytime, any reactions that may have led him to believe that responses and behaviours were modified due to these two factors.

- The length of time in the field, for a part-time ethnographic researcher, was, and will always be a challenge to those fully-employed (Samra-Fredericks, 2003). Mintzberg (1990) spent just five days or a week with each of the five CEOs in his study. This researcher spent a total of 755 hours on this research, which equates to an average of almost three and a half weeks dedicated to each strategic leader.

- The focus of this research into the lived experience of the strategic leader precluded the possibility of identifying the impact the dynamics of the CEO's personal life might have on their professional life and organisational success.

- This research only studied successful leaders as determined by financial metrics. Future studies should seek to contrast successful and unsuccessful leaders either using the same financial criteria or other success criteria. While researchers could learn a great deal from unsuccessful leaders, methodologically this may prove difficult, as these leaders may not remain at the helm of organisations sufficiently long for the study to be completed.

- This research effort is within the constraints of the researcher's current knowledge and experiences (Samra-Fredericks, 2003). There may well exist other tools, unknown to him, which other researchers could employ in researching the lived experience of executive leaders which would further add to the subject and knowledge of strategic leadership.

1.9 Overview of subsequent chapters

The structure of this work is set out below:

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review discusses the current status of leadership and provides a focus on strategic leadership theory and theory on the strategic leader.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a discussion of methodology theory and the methodological choices made in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: MY TIME IN THE FIELD

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the detail of the pre-field work journey, the fieldwork and the process of writing, reflecting and analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE RESEARCH RESULTS

This chapter presents the process of data and raw material analysis, synthesises and the results of the study.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF THE STRATEGIC LEADER

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the key findings of the study against what was reviewed in literature in terms of extant knowledge.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter discusses the significance and contribution of the research, the key propositions developed, and the implications for practice and leadership development.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review discusses the current status of the study of leadership and provides a focus on strategic leadership theory.

2.1 How leadership is generally defined and the tensions in those definitions

For decades, academic researchers have sought to define what leadership is, and to determine what makes an effective leader (Pfeffer, 1977; Bresnen, 1995; Yukl, 2002). Despite on-going efforts by both the popular press and academic leadership researchers, generating an understanding of leadership that is both intellectually compelling and emotionally satisfying has been difficult (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003).

As evidenced in both the empirical and the literature review, academic leadership research has proposed many theories and definitions of leadership. Frameworks that integrate the varied meanings of the term leadership have been developed, and arguments have been put forward that management development programmes can be used to grow executives into their strategic roles (Nicholls, 1994). In general, a review of extant leadership theory reveals that at its centre, is a process involving influence that occurs within a group and includes goal attainment (Yukl, 1989).

Obtaining one definition of leadership to which all researchers subscribe has remained extremely challenging, and the successive examination of leadership traits and styles and the effect of contingency factors has produced a body of inconclusive and often contradictory results. Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) noted the general discontent with the results produced by leadership research.

Leadership, another organisational process, is a useful tool for giving meaning to organisational dynamics and outcomes (Calder, 1977; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978); at the same time, it is a highly complex phenomenon, hence the elusiveness of a common definition (Conger, 1998).

Meindl, J.R., Ehrlich, S.B. and Dukerich, J.M. (1985) concluded that the concept of leadership remained largely elusive and enigmatic due, in the main, to research and methodological

complexities. In the same vein Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) concluded that despite the abundance of writings and empirical studies on leadership, there was still considerable dissatisfaction with what had been achieved, with the academic world still not understanding leadership particularly well. They argued further that finding a common definition of leadership may simply not be possible as two thirds of texts on the subject do not define the matter. Furthermore, even if such a definition was possible, this could possibly stifle new ideas and ways of thinking about the phenomenon.

Storey (2005) propounded that leadership had now become a panacea for all manner of problems within organisations, although as a concept it remained incomplete, insufficiently tested and inadequately debated or properly scrutinised.

Despite the numerous definitions of leadership, its importance as a concept in organisational science remains high.

The following review of the main theories of leadership demonstrates the numerous differences in definition of the concept.

2.1.1 Trait theory

Trait theory represented the first systematic effort in the study of leadership. The trait perspective was based on an early psychological focus that argued that people were born with inherited characteristics or traits. Traits were typically seen as stable constructs - in-born qualities, rather than skills that need to be developed. The focus was on studying successful leaders so that those traits could be identified. Once the traits were identified, it was assumed that people with similar traits could also become great leaders.

The trait perspective is supported by evidence showing consistent associations of specific traits with leadership emergence and perceptions (Judge and Bono, 2000). Significantly, even though leadership has been recognised as a source of power and competitive advantage in many organisations (van Knippenberg and Hogg, 2003), the fact that both historical and recent

treatments of leadership have had a trait perspective has led to the absence of general models for the development of leadership skills (Day, 2000; Yukl, 2002; Day and Halpin, 2004; Lord and Hall, 2005).

Adopting the trait perspective meant dismissing the situational context of leadership; it was, however, recently argued that leadership typically involves a complex mix of behavioural, cognitive, and social skills that may develop at different rates, require different learning experiences and be situation-dependent (Day and Halpin, 2004; Mumford, Zacarro, Harding, Jacobs, and Fleishman, 2000; Zacarro and Klimoski, 2001). Clearly, this would suggest that the mixture may differ according to the level at which leadership is practiced within an organisation. Although Stodgill (1948) identified thirteen different traits critical to leaders, he argued that leadership was not an in-born quality, but a social relationship between people. The social exchange perspective has received considerable attention in recent years.

2.1.2 Contingency theory

Contingency theory refers to different management theories developed concurrently in the late 1960s. Contingency theorists argued that previous theories had failed because they neglected the fact that management style and organisational structure were influenced by various aspects of the environment, namely contingency factors. Contingency and related situational theorists further argued that there could not be one best way to lead (Fiedler, 1967, Hersey and Blanchard, 1988).

These theories focused on the contextual factors that governed the best style of leadership: these and similar situational theories were concerned with styles and situations and not necessarily with the level of leadership (Northouse, 2004). They did not suggest that effective leadership was contingent upon level of leadership, and there is little reference to distinguishing strategic leadership from other types of leadership.

The early promise of contingency models gave way in the late 1970s to a crisis of confidence in the understanding of what leadership actually meant, and even calls from some quarters to drop the concept altogether (Stodgill, 1974; Yukl, 1981; Bryman, 1986).

2.1.3 Path-goal theory

House (1971) formulated the Path-goal Theory of Leadership, the basic principles of which are derived from the expectancy theory of motivation (Evans, 1996; Northouse, 2004). House (1971) proposed that a leader has the ability to directly impact a group's dynamics, such as performance, satisfaction and motivation and to influence subordinates in three different ways: offering rewards for achieving performance goals, clarifying paths towards these goals, and removing obstacles to performance. The researcher argued that in order to do this, a leader's leadership style had to be situational. The styles he advanced were directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented. Later researchers have argued similarly that leadership is about both influence and the achievement of desired purposes, in addition to being values-based (Bush and Glover, 2003).

Path-goal theory is thus concerned with styles of leadership and their subsequent influence on subordinate behaviour. A criticism of the theory is that it does not provide a clear understanding of how leader behaviours directly affect subordinate behaviour. In addition, no distinction is made between the hierarchical level of a leader and his or her ability to motivate employee behaviour.

2.1.4 Leader-member exchange theory

Supporters of the Leader-member Exchange Theory (LMX) (also called Vertical Dyad Linkage Theory or VDL) posited that leadership is a process centred on interactions between leaders and followers (Dansereau, Graen and Haga, 1975). Prior to LMX, academic researchers took the collective nature of subordinates as a given. LMX proponents argued, however, that leaders do not treat followers in a collective way: rather, they form unique relationships with each subordinate. LMX further described how leaders in groups utilise a series of unvoiced, unspoken and implied exchange agreements with their followers to maintain their leadership position (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995).

LMX represents a unique approach to leadership because it is the only theory that makes the concept of dyadic relationships the central variable in the leadership process (Northouse, 2004). It also draws attention to the importance of communication in leadership by arguing that the key to effective leadership is high-quality exchanges between leader and followers. Proponents of LMX theory make little reference to different levels of leadership and the dynamics of the theory.

2.1.5 Transactional or maintenance leadership

A transactional or maintenance leader has been described as one who operates within an existing system or culture, he or she contrasts with the leader who seeks to change to a new system or culture (Hambrick and Mason, 1984). The transactional leader is driven by a need to maintain the known present. This leader responds to current needs of the system and is focused on making adjustments to any arising variations from the present (Bass, 1985).

While leadership research, which literature review shows to have been focused on lower levels of management, reveals that transactional or maintenance leadership has far lower performance-stimulating potential than charismatic leadership (Lowe, Kroeck, and Sivasubramaniam, 1996) the findings cannot be generalised in relation to the performance of CEOs of large firms, who have not been part of the research samples.

2.1.6 Charismatic leadership

The Greek word charisma means divine gift. Weber (1947) coined the term charismatic leader, and argued that such a leader has significant emotional appeal to followers and a strong hold over them, especially in crisis situations where there is an acute need for direction. Weber argued that charisma is attributed to a leader by followers.

Charismatic leadership is about the relationship between a leader and follower(s). The relationship is based on a combination of the leader's performance expectations, sense of purpose and vision orientated behaviour and the follower's or followers' confidence, trust in and respect of the leader (Lowe, Kroeck, and Sivasubramaniam, 1996). In the same vein the ability to

be personally persistent with unwavering enthusiasm, in the pursuit of goals over the long term, while inspiring the same commitment in others has been argued as key attributes of charismatic leadership (Kanter, 1983; Trice and Beyer, 1986).

Theoretical support for the importance of charismatic leadership at the top executive level can be found in literature (Conger, 1999; Day and Lord, 1988; Hambrick and Finkelstein, 1987; Katz and Kahn, 1978; Yukl, 1989, 2002). For example, Katz and Kahn (1978) argued that charisma is particularly important at the top executive level as a means of mobilising an organisation to meet the demands of its environment.

Charisma interacts with uncertainly, and as such, has been found to be a key variable in the prediction of performance in organisations which operate in environments of significant uncertainty. Studies on the impact of charisma in different operating environments have also revealed that where insecurity is low or does not exist, charismatic leadership may operate dysfunctionally by tending towards the generation of unnecessary change (Shamir, House, Arthur., 1993; Trice and Beyer, 1986).

Tosi, Misangyi, Fanelli, Waldman and Yammarino (2004) argued that charisma tended to have an influence only on CEO compensation packages and stock prices and not on any other indicator of firm performance. They also argued that not enough empirical evidence existed about charisma being a general key for CEO success.

There are only two systematic studies that have addressed the relationship between firm performance and CEO charisma. Waldman, Ramirez, House, and Puranam (2001) examined the relationship between transactional and charismatic CEO leadership and financial performance in 48 Fortune 500 firms. They found that perceived charisma only had a weak direct relationship with performance, but that the association was more significant under conditions of uncertainty.

The study by Khurana (2002) examined the underlying psychological models used by various boards of directors in their search for and selection of 40 CEOs. Khurana found that the boards he studied, which used these criteria did not select CEOs who improved firm performance.

In reference to the commonality of the term charisma to describe the strategic leader, Khurana (2002) stated that leadership was generally considered the most desired attribute for successful CEOs, and that most people saw charisma as the quality required to lead successfully.

2.1.7 Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership (the term was introduced by Downtown (1973) is part of the neo-charismatic paradigm that focuses on the charismatic and affective elements of leadership (Northouse, 2004). It is a process that changes and transforms subordinates to engage in performance beyond expectations (Avolio, 1999). Bass (1985) identified that these leaders motivate people to do more than they are originally expected to do by raising their level of awareness and getting them to go beyond their own self-interest for the benefit of the wider organisation. Transformational leadership is thus argued to inspire, energise, and intellectually stimulate followers.

Burns (1978) brought the concepts of transformational leadership to bear on political leadership when he argued that transformational leaders offer followers a purpose that transcends short-term goals, and focuses on higher-order intrinsic needs. The different dimensions of transformational leadership include charisma or idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised attention.

It has been argued that the techniques and qualities of transformational leadership can be learned Bass (1990). There are a few studies of the transformational leadership of CEOs. To understand how organisations change, Tichy and Devanna (1990) studied 12 CEOs using transformational leadership theory. They found that the transformational process involved recognizing the need for change; creating a vision; and institutionalising changes.

Because of its dominance in leadership theory in recent years, there is substantial evidence that transformational leadership theory is an effective form of leadership (Lowe et al., 1996; Northouse, 2004; Yukl, 1999).

2.1.8 Comparing charismatic and transformational leadership

A comparison between charismatic and transformational leadership reveals clearly that, though they are distinct, they have much in common and complement one another. Though it has its own distinct literature, charismatic leadership plays a key role in transformational leadership (Weber, 1947; House and Aditya, 1997).

Conger (1999), in a review of charismatic and transformational leadership, identified three dominant models: transformational leadership (Bass and Avolio, 1988); the behavioural model (Conger and Kanungo, 1987); and charismatic leadership (House, 1977; House and Shamir, 1993). He argued that there was considerable and growing overlap between, and a possible convergence, of these dominant models in terms of leader behaviours and activities.

2.1.9 Full-range leadership

Avolio and Bass (2002) revised their original 1985 Full Range Leadership (FRL) Model. FRL integrates the trait, functional and situational theories as well as the skills, attitudes and behaviours that support different leadership needs within an organisation. FRL presupposes that different phases of an organisation's evolution require different leadership skills and so its integrated approach seeks to simultaneously deal with business cycles, organisational levels, the needs of different business units and personal development needs.

The FRL model has several distinct features:

i.   matching leadership types with relevant skills

ii.   aligning team and individual leadership development to business objectives

iii.   a 360-degree tool that allows the industry to bridge the gap between development costs and perceived returns - the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire.

iv.   It works optimally where the human capital strategy is aligned to the vision

v.   It proves that investment in people can create significant returns

vi.   It incorporates an inherent belief in the significance of transformational leadership in itself.

2.1.10 Level 5 leadership

Level 5 leadership is based on the idea that respect towards people, selflessness by the leader, and a strong powerful commitment to achieve results, bring out the best in subordinates (Collins, 2001). According to Collins (2001) leadership occurs in a hierarchy made up of five different levels. These levels, starting from the lowest, are: highly capable individual, contributing team member, competent manager, effective leader and finally, at the top, level 5 leader.

Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company. This does not mean that level 5 leaders do not have ego, self-interest or ambition. On the contrary, they are usually highly ambitious, but their ambition is first and foremost for the organisation and not themselves. In addition, level 5 leaders, though stubborn and ruthless at times, manage to blend extreme personal humility with intense personal will. Collins (2001) identified three steps in the process of level 5 leadership being the ability to hire the right people, the capacity to deploy them in the jobs which they are intended to do, and finally, setting a really high long-term goal. Its strength, was the possibility of achieving superb long-term lasting results. Its limitations, were its inherent requirement of a lot of time and personal investment by the leader and the fact that the leader does not receive personal credit.

2.2 The cult of individualism and the heroic view of leadership

Storey (2005) argued that society in its quest to find solutions to humanity's various challenges looks to the guidance of exceptional individuals, strong personalities, as the ultimate panacea to all the ills. In the same vein that the academic world pays commensurate attention to the subject of leadership, society and the organisation's quest for the strong individual able to solve all the problems results in exaggerated pride or self-confidence (described as hubris) in individual

CEOs, which has been argued to have an effect on organisational performance Hayward and Hambrick, 1997).

Most of the research on leadership is based predominantly on the study of American males in a western industrialised culture (House and Aditya, 1997; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman and Gupta, 2004), does not accurately reflect the complexities of leadership and management in developing economies, and has led to the promotion of highly romanticised, heroic views of leaders - what they are supposedly able to accomplish and the impact they have on people's lives (Meindl, Ehrlich, Dukerich, 1985).

There is very little research however, that demonstrates a clear relationship between the heroic view of leadership and sustainable organisational performance. Collins' longitudinal study of companies that demonstrated sustained high performance is one of the few studies that exists and is often cited.

Collins identified leadership qualities associated with long-term sustained organisation performance, which was enshrined in what he called level 5 leadership (Collins, 2001). One of the core findings in what did not contribute to the good-to-great transformation of the 11 companies that made up the final sample of those that could be said to have done something differently from their competitors, which made a difference in their performance, was that "larger than life, celebrity leaders, are negatively correlated with taking a company from good to great" (Collins, 2001: p10). What Collins (2001) found was that disciplined people (level 5 leaders), disciplined thought and disciplined action is what contributed toward moving from good to great.

2.3 Tensions in leadership theory

Given the myriad of approaches to, and definitions of leadership today, it is not surprising that many tensions can be identified. One major reason for the tension is that both historical and recent treatments of leadership have taken a trait perspective, which is supported by evidence showing consistent associations of specific traits with leadership emergence and perceptions (Judge and Bono, 2000).

Tension still exists between the definitions of leadership in general and leadership of organisations, executive or strategic leadership which has manifested in what Storey (2005) called the lack of focus in leadership research.

Storey (2005) further highlighted the tension between leadership within organisations, team leadership, and leadership of organisations (overall leadership which includes responsibility for structure and strategy).

Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) pointed out that different groups of people ascribe different meaning and value to the term leadership. The definition given to the word by the military, for example, would differ from the definition preferred by a professional. The researchers add that in real life, common academic definitions do not correspond to actual practice, and for this reason leaders find it difficult to refer to what they do as leadership.

In their study, Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) found numerous contradictions between what leaders said, and what they then did in general. For example, the leaders would articulate a crucial issue or a leadership principle, but then be deliberately vague and contradictory in relation to how to tackle it. The leaders also appeared to influence the decision-making process minimally, preferring to let others take decisions. At the same time they tended to argue that certain things were important to leadership, but then focus on different things in real life.

The leader as a person consciously and actively seeking to influence organisational relations did not exist, Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) concluded. Indeed, they argued, in the great majority of organisations and management situations, it was difficult to say anything about the possible existence of leadership in general. An exception was that the term leadership could be used to make sense of situations, relations, or people, but only under certain conditions.

Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) posited that possibly leadership was an all-encompassing phenomenon that could in fact be everything or nothing. They identified different types of

leadership styles from within one research sample: democratic, post-heroic, participatory, empowerment-facilitating, laissez-faire and fragmentary leadership. In essence, they argued that mainstream ideas about leadership, as expressed in the leadership literature and among practitioners, may assume too much.

2.4 Limitations of extant leadership research: a focus on supervisory, middle management and students as variables in research

While many laboratory experiments have been performed to test existing leadership theories, a current and significant limitation is the predominant use of supervisory, middle management and students as the subject variables. It is generally accepted by academic researchers and populist writers that leadership exists at all levels of the organisation, which has led to the criticism of traditional leadership theorists' constant focus on the dyadic processes that occur at low levels of the organisation (Gordon and Yukl, 2004).

Indeed, Storey (2005) argued that much of the analytic effort in leadership research has been focused at leadership development at lower levels. Waldman, Ramirez, House and Puranam (2001) sought to address the lack of focus on senior executives or managers by employing a research methodology whereby senior managers were chosen as respondents. The use of senior managers as a window into the workings of senior executives had been justified earlier by Shamir (1995). It was argued that senior managers were good informants concerning leadership because of their direct access to senior executives.

The methodology of Waldman et al. (2001), involved measuring transactional and charismatic leadership using items from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and his colleagues (Bass, 1985; Bass and Avolio, 1990) - the MLQ being the only instrument in widespread use that permitted the assessment of both transactional leadership and charisma (Lowe, Kroek and Sivasubramaniam 1996). Each of the participating senior managers was asked to think about and then rate their individual CEO on a five-point scale. In this research, Waldman et al. (2001) did not observe CEO behaviour directly.

The current body of literature on leadership reveals that the qualitative nature of effective leadership may differ substantially at higher and lower management levels. Although the systems view of the organisation was promulgated almost thirty years ago (Katz and Kahn, 1978), most researchers ignore the existence of multiple stakeholders and the increasingly competing demands on leaders, and continue to define leadership as a phenomenon occurring between a leader and a follower.

2.5 The challenges of leadership research

Abell (2006) argued that future leadership researchers will be challenged to understand the new strategic agenda of the leader, which will go beyond people leadership and encompass the strategic processes of establishing and articulating a clear course for the organisation, and managing the link between the external and internal worlds. Action and results will underpin the whole process. There will thus be a call for a new understanding of the leader.

An investigation of current leadership literature reveals that there has been no systematic empirical study focusing on the lived experience of the CEO. The study of this lived experience can be compared with the work of a cave explorer (spelunker). Just as the spelunker appreciates the complexity of cave structures and forms few preconceptions of the terrain ahead, so should the researcher approach the task of investigating the CEO's lived experience. Progressing deeper into the cave, the spelunker has the opportunity to experience and examine first-hand phenomena at deeper and unknown levels without being bound by any preconceptions. Assuming a cartographer's mindset, so that the vital information directly in front of his or her eyes can be connected mentally to the overall structure of the cave, all new detail becomes part of the map of the full structure (Conger, 1988).

In a similar way, the challenge for leadership researchers is to take cognisance of the theories that have been developed to date while maintaining the ability to set aside preconceptions about what leadership is or should be - and so embark on fresh research of the actual lived experience of leadership.

2.6 Direct versus indirect leadership

Gordon and Yukl (2004) argued that leadership research had not emphasised the distinction between direct and indirect forms of leadership, and that there was no theory to integrate the two forms. They further argued that executives could better enhance organisational performance through the use of indirect forms of leadership over direct forms. Indirect forms of leadership include all cultural artefacts in the organisation, performance management programmes, management processes and even external structures such as joint-ventures, alliances and partnerships. However, effectiveness of this approach is more likely where the indirect leadership forms are compatible with direct leadership behaviours used by all managers (Yukl and Lepsinger, 2004).

2.7 The relationship between executive characteristics and strategic outcomes

The results of studies of the direct impact and influence of leadership on organisational performance have been exaggerated and are far removed from reality (Lieberson and O'Connor, 1972; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978).

Much of the limited research that has been done on leadership at the strategic level focuses on an examination of executive characteristics and strategic outcomes. Waldman et al. (2001) noted that strategic management theory had become increasingly concerned with top level managers and their effects on strategy formulation and firm performance, while Hambrick and Mason (1984) argued in their Upper Echelons Theory, that top managers made a difference in strategy formulation and performance.

The Upper Echelons Theory is the dominant theoretical paradigm for the examination of executive characteristics and strategic outcomes. In its proposition Hambrick and Mason (1984) argued that organisational outcomes should be viewed as reflections of the values and cognitive bases of the top management team, and that although their theory had not been subjected to systematic or comprehensive testing, it was expected that such linkages could be detected empirically.

In contrast, Day and Lord (1988) argued that executive leadership was a consequential determinant of organisational performance, and that succession studies indicated that top-level leaders had a direct and significant effect on company performance. Attribution research countered this by demonstrating that leaders have less influence over organisational events than is often assumed, but the research did not support the conclusions that leaders are unimportant.

The argument of Meindl et al. (1985) was that in the current absence of relevant information, there is a greater bias to attribute more responsibility for organisational performance to executives (Meindl et al., 1985).

Yukl (2002) pointed out the difference in current views: some writers argue that leaders have a major influence on organisational performance (Katz and Kahn, 1978, Peters and Waterman, 1982), while others contend that leaders exert little influence on performance (Meindl et al, 1985; Pfeffer, 1977). Yukl (2002) went on to present two arguments that support this study of CEOs. His first argument was that the actions of top executives have not been the subject of empirical observation. His second was that the actions of CEOs usually have an impact on organisations over a period of time - months or even years. The present research observes the relevant behaviours.

Expounding on his two arguments, Yukl (2002) highlighted the difficulty of attributing responsibility for organisational performance to executives: while behaviours of most low-level leaders can be observed by subordinates, peers, and superiors, the top executive's actions, which often have immediate consequences for the performance of the team or group, are more subtle, and only a few members of the organisation have the opportunity to observe them directly. Many of these actions affect performance indirectly only, and the effect may be delayed by months or years, making it difficult to see the connection between leader actions and consequences.

Yukl (2002) posited that the executive characteristics necessary for effectiveness of an executive team depend on the organisational context in which the team must operate; on the nature of the environment; and on the leadership behaviour of the CEO.

2.8 Upper echelons theory

Hambrick (1987) argued that the need to understand the process, by which effective strategies are formulated and implemented, had preoccupied and concerned strategy researchers and consultants for the preceding fifteen years. This preoccupation had yielded very little in terms of ideas of techniques and tools that could be used to improve an organisations' performance in real competitive arenas. In response to the search for the right combination of the appropriate type of managers who are able to formulate and implement successful strategies, Hambrick and Mason (1984) introduced the Upper Echelons Theory. It contended that the performance of an organisation is ultimately a reflection of its top managers.

2.9 Top management teams (TMTs)

CEOs do not work in isolation: they deliver results through their top management teams. Hambrick (1987) postulated that the impact on organisational performance by the top management team is greater than that by the CEO alone. In reviewing the Upper Echelons Theory, Cannella (2001) concluded that an organisation becomes a reflection of its top managers, and that the characteristics of the top management team matter far more than those of the single highest executive.

Other researchers went further in arguing that the role of top management teams was equivalent to that of the CEO and that the definition of CEO, therefore, had to stretch to encompass the top management team (Gordon and Yukl, 2004; Zacarro and Klimoski, 2001).

The impact of TMTs has also been argued as situational with greater importance being assumed in complex and rapidly changing environment that place significant external demands on the CEO. In such environments, organisations needed diverse, but highly interdependent and closely coordinated business units (Yukl, 2002).

The fact that charisma was seen to be more effective in uncertain environments, as revealed in the review of charismatic leadership literature, combined with the argument that the impact of TMTs is situational, led some researchers to suggest that the Upper Echelons Theory should be extended to encompass such personal qualities as charismatic leadership (Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Shamir, House and Arthur, 1993; Trice and Beyer, 1986).

2.9.1 The CEO and the TMT

While the Upper Echelons Theory is about top management teams (TMTs), there is an acknowledgement that the TMT is shaped, reshaped and retained by the CEO; and it is true that in most firms the chief executive has the most power (Hambrick and Mason, 1984) to determine the nature and structure of the TMT.

The nature of the environment in which the organisation operates (in other words, the organisational context) is significant in the determination of the characteristics a TMT requires on order to be effective. Of similar significance is the management style of the CEO (Hambrick, 1987; Hambrick and Mason, 1984). Researchers have also argued that the leadership role of CEOs is critically important to the top management of large organisations (Katz and Kahn, 1978; Waldman et al., 2001).

Despite the strong and growing arguments in favour of teams, the role of the CEO within them is still a critical determinant of their effectiveness. The autocratic CEO who restricts the TMT's influence over strategic decisions has less positive impact on the TMT's performance. On the other hand, the more democratic CEO, who works closely with other top executives in making decisions, facilitates a greater impact on performance by the TMT.

The strength of the board of directors also has an effect on the extent to which a CEO, with substantial ownership power, affects the influence of the TMT. A weak and submissive board of directors indirectly empowers a CEO (with substantial ownership power) to exercise unilateral control over key decisions. Similarly, a CEO given a mandate by a powerful board of directors to

make major strategic and structural changes may have the same capacity to exercise unilateral control over decisions (Finkelstein, 1992; Hambrick and Finkelstein, 1987; Yukl, 2002).

The extent of CEO power does have an influence on the TMT's effectiveness since, it is the former ultimately who passes or vetoes all decisions. A CEO whose tenure is long may become dysfunctional, complacent and inflexible if power is concentrated in his or her hands. However, several factors come into play to minimise this likelihood, one of which is the existence of strong internal stakeholders who demand continued high performance from the CEO as a condition of remaining in office.

Yukl (2002) argued that an important and effective team should have diverse and empowered executives supported by a board with a greater share of non- executives; these empowered executives should be able to bring different perspectives to the strategy formulation process.

2.9.2 Power-sharing

While most organisations have a top management group that includes the CEO and other top executives, an alternative is the sharing of power within the top management team (Ancona and Nadler, 1989). Executives in the team collectively assume the responsibility of the chief operating officer in managing the internal operations of the organisation and they assist the CEO in formulating strategy.

There are manifold advantages to such teams in relation to how they are able to assist the CEO in carrying out his or her duties: the team is able to facilitate better strategic decision making, compensate for the weaknesses of the CEO and lack of functional knowledge, improve executive communication and cooperation, create greater commitment to decisions, improve the quality of decisions, and facilitate improved trust in the leader. (Yukl, 2002; Korsgaard, Schweiger, and Sapienze, 1995).

Executive teams have increasingly been seen as more acceptable since they were effectively used in countries such as Japan, and since the awareness grew that the stereotype of the heroic

individual leader was unrealistic for complex organisations operating within a turbulent environment (Yukl, 2002).

2.9.3 Can the advantages of teams and power-sharing be realised?

Despite the focus on TMTs, there are no guarantees that the potential advantages of teams will be realised. Just as any group of people goes through different stages of development, for example storming, norming, forming, TMTs go through the same process. New teams typically progress through a series of potentially difficult developmental stages before the team members develop mutual trust and respect and the ability to resolve conflicts in constructive ways (Bradford and Cohen, 1984).

This challenging developmental process causes some chief executives to abandon the effort in an early stage, and so forego any potential benefits that may derive from an effective top management team. Whether a CEO is able to develop an effective executive team depends in part on his or her attitude and skills, as well as perseverance and determination.

Eisenstat and Cohen (1990) found that in successful TMTs the members were selected by the CEO for their skills and experience. They were given clearly delineated limits of authority, unambiguous objectives for working within shared value systems and the freedom to use their own discretion within clearly delineated limits of authority. Furthermore, Yukl (2002) argued that the CEO has the ability to engage effective team development processes while guarding against the entrenchment of group think.

2.9.4 The importance of the role of the CEO

There is evidence of a recent trend in academic research towards focusing on the roles of executive teams and on shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003). There still exists, nevertheless, both at a local and international level, corporate strategic leaders (CEOs) at the helm of successful organisations who possess and wield a great deal of individual power and influence.

This fact further justifies the focus of this research on the CEO. Irrespective, whether TMTs have a significant impact on organisational performance or not, the CEO is still the person who has the greatest influence on the effectiveness of teams in relation to organisational performance. This current research has shown that working with and within the top management team is a key function of the effective CEO. The argument for TMTs, therefore, cannot be completed without a thorough understanding of the lived experience of the CEO.

2.10 What is strategic leadership?

The literature on the strategic leader is sparse, and those who write about it describe it as a relatively understudied phenomenon (Storey, 2005). While a great deal has been written about leadership in general (Alvesson and Svenigsson, 2003), little has been said about strategic leaders and what they actually do.

Zacarro and Horn (2003) have also noted that theories and models of leadership are written from the perspective that the processes of leadership are the same at higher and lower levels. Zacarro and Horn's assessment was that less than five percent of the leadership literature has concentrated on executive leadership (Zacarro and Horn, 2003). When strategic leadership has been examined, it has been with a focus on top management teams and the Upper Echelons Theory (Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Finkelstein and Hambrick, 1996). (Hambrick (1989) argued that a complex, uncertain and pressured environment was fertile ground for strategic leadership).

The scant research that has been completed on the strategic leader, that is the CEO, has comprised studies trying to establish a link between CEO charisma and performance (Tosi, Misangyi, Fanelli, Waldman and Yammarino 2004). There have also been studies which have examined executive leaders undertaking strategising (Samra-Fredericks, 2003). Even in the field of charismatic leadership there is a dearth of research on the strategic leader; the main body of substantive research on charisma has not focused on CEOs and firm performance (Tosi et al., 2004).

To add to the difficulty, recent studies have caused confusion by using the term strategic leadership extensively. This has led to some researchers observing that empirical literature does not always distinguish between the study of strategic leaders, and that of strategic leadership (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001). In addition, Rowe (2001) argued that the terms strategic leadership and executive leadership have been used interchangeably, and that they both involve the management of the organisation as a whole, as well as efforts to attain short and long-term objectives for the organisation (Rowe 2001).

Baron and Henderson (1995) explained that strategic leadership was dependent upon knowledge bases, support structures, appropriate training and the ability to initiate activity; while Gordon and Yukl (2004) described strategic leadership as a process recognising that leadership occurred at all levels of the organisation, and involved external as well as internal processes.

Davies and Davies (2004) defined strategic leaders as people who are strategically orientated, and who have the ability to align all of the organisational stakeholders behind a strategic plan of action. They further argued that strategic leaders are action and future-orientated, are generally flexible and have the ability to know what is right.

Similarly, Abell (2006) put forward that the primary task of leadership - to move the organisation into the future, was strategic in nature. A secondary objective was to create indirect channels for leadership such as culture, systems, and approaches that allowed leadership to flourish across the whole organisation.

According to Sosik, Jung, Berson, Dionee, and Jaussi (2005), the phrase strategic leadership came into being, during research work on strategic management, and it referred to the determination of strategic direction. Strategic leadership was also seen as a series of processes by which one sought to align the desires of internal and external stakeholders. To understand strategic leadership, argued Sosik et al.(2005) , it was necessary to identify what effective top leaders actually do in order to produce a strategy-focused organisation. (This goal aligns with the objective of this research.) They argued that outstanding strategic leaders display key behaviours

that enable the organisation to effectively execute its strategy. This study is not about strategic leadership but about the lived experience of the strategic leader.

2.10.1 Strategic leadership as the top management team

Cannella Jr. and Monroe (1997) argue that strategic leadership refers to the behaviour of those at the apex of an organisation rather than the behaviour of people at any other level. As was noted earlier, some researchers even went so far as arguing for a broadening of the definition of the CEO to encompass the top management team (Gordon and Yukl 2004; Zacarro and Klimoski, 2001).

Proponents of the Upper Echelons Theory (Hambrick, 2001) also support the argument for strategic leadership as a top management team process (though notably, other researchers reviewing the Upper Echelons Theory have argued that strategic leadership is a relational process, and that the characteristics of the single top most executive do not matter as much as those of the top management team (Cannella Jr., 2001).

A review of the available literature shows that strategic leadership focuses upon executives who have overall responsibility for an organisation. Glen (2001) extends this distinction by arguing that strategic leadership enhances long-term wealth creation through the influence of others for long-term viability while maintaining or assuring the organisation's short-term financial stability. In contrast, managerial leadership destroys wealth because it is purely short-term focused.

2.10.2 Definitions of the strategic leader

Yukl (2002) explores in great detail the issue of strategic leadership by executives. He examines at length the relationship between the role of the executive and organisation's performance. He further identifies constraints that determine the ability of a CEO to impact organisational performance.

Yukl (2002) identifies the following internal constraints or organisation-specific factors: the existence of powerful coalitions or inside forces; the financial condition of the organisation; and a

strong organisational culture that resists change. Each of these internal constraints affects the amount of power and discretion the CEO has in making decisions that affect organisational performance.

In terms of external constraints, Yukl (2002) identified the nature of the organisation's primary product or service; the type of markets in which the organisation operates; the nature of demand for its products and services and where it is placed in terms of competitive position; the existence of powerful external stakeholders; the state of the political-legal environment; and how internal and external stakeholders perceive the performance of the organisation.

Internal and external constraints do not act in isolation to influence the pattern of a CEO's behaviour. They interact with each other and with the managers' attributes (characteristics such as ambition, tolerance of ambiguity, cognitive skills, personal mastery, and social and diplomatic skills).

Inferences about a leader's competence and perceptions about the need for change have implications for the leader's capacity to influence the future performance of the organisation. Lord and Maher (1991) proposed that the discretion afforded the CEO to make long range impact organisational strategy decisions, say 5 to 20 years into the future determined the CEO's effectiveness.

2.10.3 Mintzberg: what strategic leaders/ managers do

One of the few studies to focus on what managers actually do was the pioneering work of Mintzberg (1973, 1975). It should be noted that at the time of his research Mintzberg was interested in managerial work and did not use the term strategic leadership. However, his term manager refers directly to the CEO or the strategic leader of an organisation.

In response to the general ignorance of the nature of managerial work, Mintzberg (1973, 1975) sought to answer the question: what do managers do? His chief objective was to introduce a useful and practical description of the manager's job based on research on how managers spent

their time. His study revealed that the manager's job could be described in terms of roles or sets of behaviours. He identified ten roles deriving from formal authority and status. He then separated these into interpersonal, informational and decisional roles.

The three interpersonal roles are:

1. figurehead
2. leader
3. liaison.

In turn, the interpersonal roles give rise to three informational roles:

4. monitor
5. disseminator
6. spokesperson.

Finally, these lead to four decisional roles:

7. entrepreneur
8. disturbance handler
9. resource allocator
10. negotiator.

Mintzberg (1973, 1975) argued that a manager's level of insight into his or her own work significantly influenced his or her effectiveness. In other words, the manager who can be introspective about his or her own work is likely to be effective at the job. This type of manager also has the ability to continue to learn on the job.

2.10.4 The importance of the strategic leader

Mintzberg (1990: p175) provides the most cogent argument for the importance of the strategic leader's role. He vigorously defends the role of the manager in the conclusion to his article: "No

job is more vital to our society than that of the manager. The manager determines whether our social institutions will serve us well or whether they will squander our talents and resources. It is time to strip away the folklore about managerial work and study it realistically so that we can begin the difficult task of making significant improvement in its performance." Mintzberg threw down the gauntlet for researchers to study managerial work and the work of the strategic leader in more detail.

2.10.5 The need for the empirical study of the lived experience of the strategic leader

It seems clear from literature that the term strategic leader focuses purely on the one person at the helm or apex of any organisation (the CEO) while strategic leadership is concerned with the leadership principles that strategic leaders use. In this research the term strategic leader has been used to describe the top manager in an organisation, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and strategic leadership has been used to describe the process of being a CEO.

In a retrospective commentary on his classic article, Mintzberg (1990) lamented the fact that academic research had remained superficial and pedestrian manifested by numerous attempts to replicate prior research with the result that great ignorance still pervaded the contents of a manager's job.

This research aims to address the deficit by adding to the existing body of strategic leadership literature a comprehensive study of what the lived experience of the CEO is, and what he or she actually does in practice.

2.11 Summary and implications

Existing leadership research, though vast in quantity, reveals various deficiencies, limitations, unexplored researched opportunities and unanswered questions. These are presented below:

(1) the lack of empirical studies to test the various theories proposed by many researchers, especially at strategic leadership levels (House and Aditya , 1997);

(2) the scant attention paid to the processes by which strategic leaders affect the performance of organisations (House and Aditya , 1997);

(3) the need for strategic leadership researchers to learn from other studies (for instance, the research on teams) and to incorporate them in their work (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001);

(4) the primary focus of previous studies on lower levels of management (Waldman, Ramirez, House, Puranam, 2001);

(5) the focus of research on supervisory leadership at the expense of a concentration on strategic leadership and leaders' organisationally related functions (House and Aditya , 1997);

(6) the need to develop a model from the roles identified and to test it empirically on CEOs of different backgrounds and cultures;

(7) the need to understand the effectiveness of individual CEO leadership versus that of Top Management Teams (Hambrick and Mason, 1984) ; and

(8) the fact that leader-behaviour and leader-trait research centred almost exclusively on the observation of individuals at lower organisational levels, whose primary role concerned supervision or observation of university students in laboratories, to the exclusion of studies on higher-level leaders responsible for the functioning of entire organisations (House and Aditya, 1997).

This ethnographic research seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge on the strategic leader through observation of leaders responsible for the performance of the entire organisation. It does not seek to test any hypothesis. Ethnography may be concerned with creating a hypothesis, but it is difficult to see ethnography as being concerned with testing one (Symon and Cassell, 1998). Rather, this research offers questions that need to be answered: what do effective CEOs do and how do they do it? How do they think about what they do?

The researcher is cognisant of the fact that the theories developed by ethnographers are dynamic in nature (Van Maanen, 1983). He is also aware that proposing a theory at the outset of a study would allow for the emergence of data that fits the proposed theory (Van Maanen, 1983) while at the same time framing how that data is interpreted. The same data could lead to the induction of research propositions (Lee, 1999). The research was approached with the awareness that the quality and nature of the emerging data would be influenced by the researcher's own

determination of what was or what was not significant during observation, the different means of gathering the data, the researcher's self-reflexivity and the way the subjects behaved in producing the data (Van Maanen, Dabbs, and Faulkner, 1982).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

In this chapter the researcher provides a thorough description of the methodological challenges in an ethnographic study of strategic leadership. This is followed by a discussion on qualitative research methods, and a theoretical discussion on the methods used in this study. Attention is paid to issues of reliability and validity of qualitative data vis-à-vis the methods used in the study. Finally, the sample for the study and the specific data-collection procedures are presented and supported.

3.1.1. Methodological challenges in researching leadership

Leadership is a dynamic and multi-level phenomenon that possesses a specific symbolic component. Its characteristics and social construction make it a research topic of extreme and enduring complexity (Conger, 1998; Yukl, 2002). Unlike qualitative methods of research, quantitative methods are limited in their ability to capture and interpret the depths of this intricacy.

3.1.1.1 Multiple levels of phenomena

To understand the multiple levels of leadership, one may imagine it embedded in nests of phenomena (Avolio and Bass, 1995): the intrapsychic, the behavioural, the interpersonal, the organisational, and the environmental (Conger, 1998). One of the greatest shortcomings of quantitative research has been its inability to draw effective links across these multiple levels to explain leadership events and outcomes (Avolio and Bass, 1995). Qualitative research, on the other hand, is effective in clarifying the complex, hidden and subconscious structures of leadership phenomena (Conger, 1998).

3.1.1.2 The dynamic nature of the leadership process

Dynamism results when a leader's relations with followers and with the larger environment changes over periods of time. Such organisational change is an integral part of the leadership process. Events such as achievements, failures, opportunities, and crises constantly reshape leadership experiences for both the leader and the led.

The dynamic nature of leadership poses serious challenges for a researcher using quantitative methods. Quantitative methods seek the facts or causes of phenomena, which can be expressed numerically and analysed statistically. Their interest is in generalisability and they are often connoted with a positivist, deductive, natural science world view.

Quantitative methods consist of standardized, structured data collection including surveys, closed-ended interviews, and tests. By nature these methods measure only static moments in time. They are not easily able to track in any richness of detail how events unfold, or how they may reshape the interpretation of events. In addition, survey methodology can promote a certain detachment in the investigator from the research site, to the point that researchers may simply be unaware of newly emerging factors.

By contrast, qualitative methods demand far greater immersion in the research site, and offer greater opportunities for the capture of a longitudinal perspective in investigations, particularly if ethnographic methods such as participant observation are employed. They afford a high degree of flexibility in the discernment and exploration of the influence of newly emerging factors caused by individual and environmental changes. They examine phenomena in depth and detail without predetermined categories or hypotheses. Emphasis is on understanding the phenomena as it exists. They are often connoted with naturalistic inquiry, inductive, social anthropological worldview. Qualitative methods usually consist of three kinds of data collection: observation, open-ended interviewing, and document review (Scriven, 1991; Phillips, 1992).

3.1.1.3 The symbolic and subjective component of leadership

The symbolic and subjective component of strategic leadership also has important implications for research methodology (Conger, 1989; Hunt, 1991). While quantitative methods enable the researcher to capture realities that are not fluid and dynamic in nature, they are less effective in subjective studies. Conger (1998) argued that quantitative methods in and of themselves are insufficient on the grounds that they capture relatively uni-dimensional and static perspectives on leadership. Indeed, the researcher employing them remains an external observer (Conger, 1998).

Qualitative methods enable the researcher to study a phenomenon from within, to go beyond what may be evident at the surface level. By utilising the multi-method approach – observations, interviews, documents, books, videotapes, diaries, and any other available data, the researcher is able to rich thick description from the richness and depth of observation and from finer details that can only be perceived by qualitative researcher (Das, 1983; Straus and Corbin, 1990).

Qualitative methodology enables the researcher to capture the depth of the strategic leadership phenomenon in all its dimensions. The researcher is able to unearth and fully explore the unexpected (Conger, 1998). Indeed, these research methods afford the researcher of subjective studies the flexibility to adopt an interpretive outlook and the ability to comprehend the ever-shifting dynamics of leadership.

When properly employed, qualitative methods offer researchers of leadership several distinct advantages over quantitative methods:

1. more opportunities to explore leadership phenomena in significant depth, and to do so longitudinally (Bryman, 1992);
2. more effective means to investigate symbolic dimensions (Morgan and Smircich, 1980);
3. the flexibility to discern and detect unexpected phenomena during the research (Lundberg, 1976);
4. the ability to investigate processes more effectively;
5. greater opportunity for exploration and for sensitivity to contextual factors.

In order to understand the phenomenon of CEO leadership, the most appropriate research methodology to employ is, therefore, qualitative. The phenomenon cannot be adequately studied within neatly arranged compartments in isolated and artificial settings. Indeed, it has been argued that the academic world does not yet know enough about the strategic leadership phenomenon to be able to simulate it in a laboratory. If this were possible, the door would be open for meaningful quantitative research into the phenomenon. In any event, the process of simulating the strategic

leadership phenomenon in a laboratory, if indeed it were possible, would simplify the complex and dynamic process to the extent that its very nature, and the study of it, would be compromised (Mintzberg, 1978).

Qualitative research designs do not force a dynamic phenomenon into categories that have no relation to true real-world functioning (Das, 1983) on the contrary, they permit the researcher to go out into the world and experience the research subject as it truly functions in its own environment. They allow for the richest of studies, often illuminating in radically new ways phenomena as complex as leadership. They are responsible for paradigm shifts, insights into the role of context, and longitudinal perspectives that other methods often fail to capture (Isabella, 1990, Mintzberg, 1973, Roberts and Bradley, 1988).

It is paradoxical that despite the myriad advantages of the use of qualitative research methods, their contribution to leadership research remains remarkably limited. This is a true anomaly, considering that qualitative research is the methodology of choice for topics as contextually rich as leadership (Conger, 1998).

3.2 Qualitative research methodology

Since very few research attempts have been made to understand the phenomenon of effective CEO leadership in practice, it is important that the research methodology chosen for this current study is the one that would lead to the most appropriate study procedures and the best final understanding of the complex subject at hand (Symon and Cassell, 1998; Schurink, 2003).

Denzin and Lincoln (2004) identified the following major differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches to research:

i.   Qualitative research emphasises processes and searches for deep meanings of the experiences being studied.

ii.   Quantitative research emphasises rigorous examination and statistical measurements of causal relationships between variables.

iii.   Qualitative researchers stress the importance of the subjective relationship between researcher and research object.

iv.   Quantitative research does not factor in the relationship between researcher and the research object.

v.   Qualitative researchers stress the context of the reality being studied.

vi.   Quantitative studies purport all inquiry to be within a value-free framework.

The phenomenon currently being researched, the leadership of effective CEOs, involves investigation of the social experience of strategic leadership and how the phenomenon is created and given meaning. The use of a qualitative research methodology will lead to the most comprehensive and in-depth understanding of this experience.

3.2.1 Five social research paradigms

In qualitative research the term methodology refers to the approach or paradigm that underpins the research. Paradigms within social sciences are the categories into which theories about how the world works, what the nature of humankind is and what it is possible to know and not know, are categorised (Blaxter, Hughes, Tight, 2001; Burrell and Morgan, 1979). According to Oakley (1999:p155), paradigms are "ways of breaking down the complexity of the real world that tell their adherents what to do. Paradigms are essentially intellectual cultures, and as such they are fundamentally embedded in the socialisation of their adherent: a way of life rather than simply a set of technical and procedural differences".

Five social research paradigms have been identified and defined by Blaxter et al. (2001). These are listed below:

Positivism: this is the view that social science procedures should mirror those of the natural sciences as closely as possible. Quantitative approaches that use statistics and experiments are seen as classic examples.

Post-positivism: although this paradigm maintains the same set of basic beliefs as positivism, post-positivists argue that one can only know social reality imperfectly and probabilistically. While objectivity remains ideal, there is an increased use of qualitative techniques in order to check the validity of findings. "Post-positivism holds that only partially objective accounts of the world can be produced, because all methods are flawed" (Denzin and Lincoln 1994: p15).

Interpretivism: this approach to social research sees interpretations of the social world as culturally derived and historically situated. The paradigm has many variants, including hermeneutics, phenomenology and symbolic interactionism. Interpretivism is often linked to the work of Max Weber (1947), who suggested that the social sciences are concerned with verstehen (understanding) compared to erklaren (explaining); erklaren forms the basis of seeking causal explanations and is the hallmark of natural sciences. The distinction between verstehen and erklaren underlies the (often exaggerated) distinction between qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

Critical: a critical paradigm critiques both positivism and interpretivism as ways of understanding the social world. Included in this category are feminist, neo-Marxist, anti-racist and participatory approaches (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996; Calas and Smircich, 1999).

Postmodern: the postmodernist approach seeks to overcome the boundaries that are placed between art and social science. This approach to social research does not offer a view of rational progression to a better world; rather, it proposes that we might expect social life to be in some way different. A variety of this paradigm is post-structuralism. (Calas and Smircich, 2003).

3.2.2 Differences between quantitative research and qualitative research
In addition to the differences between quantitative and qualitative research that were discussed earlier in this study, it should also be noted that qualitative researchers use ethnographic prose,

historical narratives, first-person accounts and biographical and autobiographical materials, among others while quantitative researchers use mathematical models, statistical tables and graphs, and often write about their research in impersonal, third-person prose.

Further to these differences, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) pointed out five differences between quantitative research and qualitative research:

Uses of positivism. Both research methodologies are shaped by the positivist and post-positivist traditions within the physical and social sciences. These traditions cling to naïve and critical realist positions concerning reality and its perception. Positivists contend that there is a reality out there to be studied, captured, and understood, whereas post-positivists argue that reality can never be fully apprehended, only approximated (Guba, 1990). Post-positivism relies on multiple methods as a way of capturing as much of reality as possible, and places emphasis on the discovery and verification of theories. Traditional evaluation criteria, such as internal and external validity, are stressed, as is the use of qualitative procedures that lend themselves to structured, sometimes statistical analysis.

Acceptance of postmodern sensibilities. A new generation of qualitative researchers argues that positivist methods are but one way of telling a story about society. They may be no better or no worse than any other method - they just tell a different kind of story. This tolerant view is not shared by everyone. Many members of the critical theory, constructivist, poststructural, and postmodern schools of thought reject positivist criteria when evaluating their own work. They see these criteria as irrelevant to their work, contending that they reproduce only a certain kind of science, a science that silences too many voices.

These researchers seek alternative methods for evaluating their work, including verisimilitude, emotionality, personal responsibility, an ethic of caring, political praxis, multi-voiced texts, and dialogues with subjects. In response, positivists and post-positivists argue that what they do is good science, free of individual bias and subjectivity. As noted above, they see postmodernism as an attack on reason and truth.

Capturing the individual's point of view. Both qualitative and quantitative researchers are concerned with the individual's point of view. However, qualitative investigators think they can move closer to the individual's perspective through detailed interviewing and observation. They argue that quantitative researchers are seldom able to capture the subject's perspective because they have to rely on more remote, inferential, empirical materials. The empirical materials produced by the softer, interpretive methods are regarded by many quantitative researchers as unreliable, impressionable and not objective.

Examining the constraints of life. Qualitative researchers are more likely than quantitative researchers to confront the constraints of the everyday social world. They see this world in action and embed their findings in it. Quantitative researchers detach from this world and seldom study it directly. They seek a nomothetic (based on a system of law) or etic (without consideration to the role of a unit in a system) science based on probabilities derived from the study of large numbers of randomly selected cases. These kinds of studies stand above and outside the constraints of everyday life. Qualitative researchers are committed to an emic (consideration of the role of the unit in a system), idiographic (study of individuals), case-based position, which directs their attention to the specifics of particular cases.

Securing rich descriptions. Qualitative researchers believe that rich descriptions of the social world are valuable, whereas quantitative researchers, with their etic, nomothetic commitments, are less concerned with such detail.

The five points above reflect different traditions, classics, and forms or representation, interpretation and evaluation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

While interpretive approaches follow ideas from philosophical phenomenology and its emphasis on lived experience as the basis of human action and activities (Sandberg, 2005), qualitative researchers are, in essence, philosophers: they are guided by highly abstract principles (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Bateson, 1972) that combine beliefs about ontology (what kind of being is the

human being? What is the nature of reality?), epistemology (what is the relationship between the inquirer and the known?) and methodology (how do we know the world, or gain knowledge of it?). These beliefs shape how the researcher sees the world and acts in it.

Significantly, the researcher is "bound within a net of epistemological and ontological premises which – regardless of ultimate truth or falsity – become partially self-validating" (Bateson, 1972:p314). This net, the beliefs that guide action and inform the researcher's epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises, may be termed a paradigm (Guba, 1990), or interpretive framework. All research is in this sense interpretive, in so far as it is guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied. Some of these beliefs may be taken for granted, only assumed; others are highly problematic and controversial.

While quantitative research is about metrics, design instruments, classification categories and data synthesis (Van Maanen, 1979; Das, 1983), qualitative research produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Straus and Corbin, 1990). It is open-ended, and seeks to achieve depth of exploration by collecting as much information as possible about smaller numbers of critical incidents, events, situations and people interactions. Qualitative research seeks to achieve depth rather than breadth (Blaxter et al., 2001).

In choosing the qualitative approach, I take note of the fact that it is best suited to assist the researcher in understanding the total gestalt of the phenomenon being studied. The lived experience of the strategic leader can only be understood if all possible variables that influence it are included in the study. The only way to ensure this is by using qualitative research (Das, 1983).

As submitted earlier, this research does not set out to confirm or test a hypothesis or a preconceived relation among assumed leadership variables. Neither does it seek to test, determine or refine any pre-identified CEO characteristics or traits. The objective is to seek to find out what CEOs actually do. In constructing this objective the underlying realisation is that the

participant CEOs are already living the experience of being effective leaders. From their perspective they are effective and successful leaders. The research in one respect therefore seeks to understand what CEOs actually do from their own point of view and within their own contexts.

3.3 Qualitative research process

3.3.1 The researcher's distinctive interpretive community

Qualitative research has evolved to the extent that it now has an abundance of paradigms; evaluation criteria; inquiry strategies and, methods for analysing, interpreting, arguing and writing, with more being debated, discussed and developed (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). In addition, the researcher's class, race, gender and ethnicity are also seen to shapes the process of inquiry.

The researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas - a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that are then examined (methodology, analysis) in specific ways. Every researcher speaks from within a distinct interpretive community that incorporates its own historical research traditions into a discrete point of view. This point of view leads the researcher to adopt particular views on the other who is studied.

Particular to this current research is the fact that the researcher is black, having been born, raised and schooled, and having worked, in foreign country, while all the participants are local white males.

3.3.2 Separating subjective experience and objective observations

The reality of being a qualitative researcher is that any study is filtered through the lenses of culture, race, ethnicity, language, values, beliefs and social class. This researcher was constantly cognisant of this.

Two key assumptions underlie qualitative research. The first is that researchers can objectively report on their own observations of the social world, including the experiences of others. The

second is that researchers are able to report on their own experiences (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). These two beliefs have led qualitative researchers across disciplines to seek a method that would allow them to record their own observations accurately, while still uncovering the meaning that their subjects bring to their life experience. The qualitative method allows for reliance upon the subjective verbal and written expressions of meaning given by the individuals studied, these expressions being windows into their inner life.

In the process of searching for a method the researcher has cultivated a perennial focus on the human disciplines of qualitative, interpretive methods of study (Dilthey, 1976; 1990).

In this study the researcher made extensive use of field notes to keep an accurate record of all observations. The field notes contain not only minute observations of the strategic leaders in action, the people they interacted with and the environments in which they operated; they include detailed notes on some of the internal experiences the researcher went through. This approach kept the researcher constantly aware of how his subjective experience may influence the observation of the studied phenomenon. The researcher also utilised his knowledge and experience of Neuro Linguistic Programming to maintain a constant state of awareness of his subjective experience throughout the period of the research.

3.3.3 The Neuro Linguistic Communication Model: how filters affect the objectivity of the researcher's observations

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) argued that there was no clear view into the inner life of an individual: that every gaze was necessarily filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity. The immutability of these lenses meant there was no such thing as objective observations - only observations socially situated in the worlds of the observer and the observed (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) is primarily a study of human subjectivity, and this researcher, who continually exercises the NLP therapy techniques, comprehends how filters alter perceptions of reality.

Neuro Linguistic Programming sets out to discover how people learn, think, do things excellently and replicate success. It focuses on the difference between those who excel, and those who get by in relation to the way they communicate, motivate, influence, negotiate, lead, and empower.

The NLP communication model explains how people process information neurologically and how that affects their behaviour. Our five senses - sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell - absorb two million bits of information at any one moment. Our conscious mind, on the other hand, can only take in approximately seven bits of information in the same period. In order to compensate for the vast difference (two million down to seven), the mind filters the events our senses take in by deleting, distorting and generalising the information through language, memories, attitudes, values, beliefs and decisions, meta-programs and time coding. We are left with an Internal Representation (with pictures, sounds and feelings) of the world that our senses absorbed.

The filtering by our senses can thus change our physiology and affect our behaviour. Indeed, people are in a constant state of flux, and their physiology can affect their attitude just as easily as behaviour can affect one's language. This model forms the basis of all NLP. If people did not delete, distort and generalise the events they take in, consciously they would be in sensory overload.

Deletion occurs when individuals select to pay attention to certain aspects of their experience and not others. In so doing they overlook or omit certain sensory information. If they did not, their conscious mind would be instantly overwhelmed. Distortion occurs when people manipulate their experience of sensory data so as to misrepresent reality. In fact, we do this frequently when we plan something: we distort reality in order to construct imaginary futures.

Distortion also is useful for self-motivation. Motivation occurs when the material an individual distorts has already been changed by one of his or her filtering systems.

The third filtering process is known as generalisation, and it occurs when an individual draws global conclusions based on his or her experiences. At its best, generalisation is one of the ways that people learn: they filter the information they have absorbed and draw broad conclusions about the world based on one or more experiences. At its worst, generalisation is the process undertaken when an individual takes a single event and turns it into a lifetime of experience.

The question is why do two people who experience the same stimulus not necessarily have the same response? The answer lies in the way in which they delete, distort, and generalise the external information is different. The advice from NLP is that one be aware of the filters one uses, for the world is never what one thinks it is. If one absorbs two million bits of information at a time, and is aware of only seven of those bits, there is much data being missed.

The NLP communication model clarifies what Denzin and Lincoln (1994:p12) argue when they say "there are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of the observer and the observed. Subjects, or individuals, are seldom able to give full explanations of their actions or intentions; all they can offer are accounts, or stories, about what they did and why. No single method can grasp the subtle variations in ongoing human experience. Qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive methods, always seeking better ways to make more understandable the worlds of experience that have been studied."

A researcher has to be cognisant of the role that his or her own sensory filters play, and the way in which the subject's perception of reality is affected by his or her own filters. NLP training and expertise enabled this researcher to be constantly aware of the role of his own perception of reality.

3.4 Qualitative approaches

The term qualitative approach refers to how qualitative research is thought about and conducted. The approach encapsulates the role of the researcher(s), the method of data analysis and the

purpose and stages of the research. There are currently four major qualitative approaches: ethnography, phenomenology, field research and grounded theory (Trochim, 2000). These approaches are further explained below.

3.4.1 Ethnography

The ethnographic approach to qualitative research originated largely in the field of anthropology. Anthropology largely emphasises the study of an entire culture, any group of people or an organisation.

Ethnography is an extremely broad-based approach. It comprises a variety of field research methods, the most common of which is participant observation: the ethnographer becomes an active participant, immersing him or herself in the culture and taking extensive field notes. Ethnographic study sets no pre-calculated limit on what will be observed, and defines no real ending point. The researcher stops when he or she feels thick description has been reached.

3.4.2 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is the study of people's subjective experiences and interpretations of the world. This approach to qualitative methodology has a philosophical perspective and has long been linked with several social research disciplines, including psychology, sociology and social work.

3.4.3 Field research

A researcher who undertakes field research gathers qualitative data by observing phenomena in its natural environment, and maintains extensive field notes. These are later coded and variously analysed. The approach is closely related to the ethnographic participant observation method.

3.4.4 Grounded theory

This complex and iterative process involves the generation of theory grounded and rooted in observation. Generative questions start the process and guide the research. As data is gathered, core theoretical concepts are identified. Verification and summary follow and the result is the evolution of one core category. As with ethnography, the researcher stops when he or she feels thick description of the core concept has been reached

By the end of the 19th century, gaining experiential knowledge of cultures replaced armchair methods. Early ethnographers began to realise that their own direct participation in the daily lives of the subjects been studied was foundational to their methodology (Tedlock, 2000). One example of this new thinking on methodology was by Cushing who wrote: "My method must succeed. I live among Indians, I eat their food, and sleep in their houses… on account of this, thank God, my notes will contain much which those of all other explorers have failed to communicate" (Cushing, 1979:p136 – 137).

Thus, Jeffrey and Troman (2004) argued, with reference to Denzin (1994), that an ethnographic approach is necessary if one is to understand the intricacies of social situations. According to the researchers:

> The ethnographic approach… "captures and records the voices of lived experiences… contextualises experience…goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances… presents details, context, emotion, and webs of social relationships that join persons to one another" resulting in an empirical social world which is: the minute by minute, day to day social life of individuals as they interact together, as they develop understandings and meanings, as they engage in joint action and respond to each other as they adapt to situations, and as they encounter and move to resolve problems that arise through their circumstances. (Woods,1996, p37).

Van Maanen (1982) explained that the primary characteristics of the ethnographic method were extended time in the field, involved participation in key activities, and involved first-hand contact with the subjects of the study. Van Maanen (1982) argued that the main aim of ethnographic studies was to unlock the lived experience of the participants. Ethnographic research is therefore about observation. It is broadly used to refer to a variety of studies using techniques such as participant observation and documentary analysis (Das, 1983).

Although Malinowski (1967) has been credited with formulating fieldwork as a paradigm or theory, the practice of fieldwork, however, was clearly not invented by Malinowski; what he actually

accomplished was the enshrinement of fieldwork as a central element of ethnography (Rabinow, 1985).

It is important to note that ethnography goes beyond mere data collection. Indeed, it is defined, not by its methodology, but by its subject matter, ethnos or culture (Chambers, 2000). It seeks to explain social or cultural processes (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994) and to reveal how culture, at a macro or micro level, grows and is influenced by people's behaviours and experiences.

Ethnography is also about transforming research results into a written or visual form, a continuation of fieldwork rather than a transparent record of past field experiences (Tedlock, 2000; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

Culture is defined as the characteristic understandings of a discernible group, large or small. These understandings include shared meanings, common patterns of behaviour and generally accepted values within the group. A culture's predominant features are considered to be so durable that newcomers to a group can easily identify and adopt them (Chambers, 2000).

Current ethnographers have started viewing culture as a process that is constructed and negotiated when groups interact. Previously, culture was seen as patterns that were deeply rooted in human consciousness and that were resistant to change. It is noteworthy that earlier views of culture ignored the processes by which culture became meaningful (Chambers, 2000).

The result of ethnography is cultural description - this is only possible after lengthy periods of participant observation, where the researcher becomes part of the phenomenon being studied, and so gains experiential knowledge of the culture (Van Maanen, 1982; Tedlock, 2000).

In a sense, ethnography is about watching and seeing. Henry Mintzberg (1990) argued that what managers say and what they do are usually not related. His research methodology involved observation of managers as well as review of other researcher's studies of managers of organisations or subunits. Mintzberg's argument and his methodology provide good grounding

and support for an ethnographic study of CEOs. This current research wanted to discover what it was that CEOs did, rather than rely on what they said they did. The current research therefore sought to uncover and explicate the ways in which CEOs live the experience of been strategic leaders (Van Maanen, 1979).

3.4.5 Genres of ethnography

Over the course of a career an ethnographer employs a number of genres with which to create and communicate his or her findings to different audiences. Three commonly used genres are the biography or life history, the memoir and the narrative ethnography (Tedlock, 2000; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

The biography or life-history illuminates cultural, historical, and social facts rather than individual lives or aspects of personality where life histories depend upon one individual selected and made to stand for an entire culture. The memoir narrows the lens and focuses on an aspect of the researcher's time in the field that was unusually vivid, full of affect, or framed by unique events.

Narrative ethnography, which takes into account the effect of interactions between the researcher and the researched, evolved from the overlapping of the first two genres, life history and memoir. This genre seeks to portray accurately the subjects of biographies but also to include the researcher's own experiences in the texts.

Ultimately, ethnographic researchers all tell stories about the cultures they have studied. These stories, portrayed within specific paradigms, are sourced from diverse resources. The stories tend to be complex, deep, reflexive creations. They are formed from a variety of available materials that portray the researcher's images, understanding, sense and interpretation of the phenomenon studied. The stories, bricolage in nature, emphasise and stress the connectivity of the different parts to the whole, and the meaningful relationships within the cultures studied (Weinstein and Weinstein, 1991; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

A bricoleur is a professional do-it-yourself person, a Jack of all trades, who produces a dynamic construction, or bricolage: a pieced-together, close-knit set of practices that changes and takes new forms as different tools, methods, and techniques are added to the puzzle (Levi-Strauss, 1966; Weinstein and Weinstein, 1991). In the interpretative approach the multiple methods of qualitative research may be viewed as a bricolage. The researcher is the bricoleur, who utilises whatever empirical materials are at hand to make sense of the phenomena being studied (Levi-Strauss, 1966; Weinstein and Weinstein, 1991; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

This researcher's bricolage has been made up of multi-method, observations, diary analysis, different genres of ethnography, self-reflection and introspection, video-taped interviewing, and wide reading on various related topics. The result of utilising the different genres, both in the field and afterwards, resulted in a rich interplay of conscious and unconscious factors, in the form of narrative ethnography that intertwined the biography with the story of the ethnographic encounter (Tedlock, 2000). The story, in the end, is a portrait of both the people studied and the researcher. It is the true story of the researcher's lived experience. This is the true essence of narrative ethnography (Tedlock, 2000).

3.4.6 Classes of participant observation in ethnography

Ethnographic researchers go into the field to study phenomena that is little understood and that is generally hid from public view. Participant observation is best suited for this type of research work (Waddington, 1994).

A key advantage of participant observation, but one that also provides a challenge for researchers, is that it occurs in a real-world context. It happens in the natural context of occurrence, and follows the normal stream of everyday life in real time. Though it tends to be rich in contextualised detail and vivid to the observer, participant observation is minimised in academic research reports (Lee, 1999).

Qualitative researchers commonly distinguish four classes of participant observers (Gold, 1958; Creswell, 1994; Waddington, 1994). These are described below.

1. The complete participant : this researcher participates fully but covertly as an organisational member. In addition, the researcher takes measures to hide his or her scientific role, intentions and observational activities. The researcher establishes and nurtures normal work- and personal relationships with organisational members. The true identity and purpose of the observer are not known to those being observed.

2. The participant as observer: this researcher participates fully but overtly as a researcher. His or her scientific intentions, role, and observational activities are public and not hidden. The researcher establishes and nurtures normal work- and personal relationships with organisational members. The observer and the subjects are aware that their relationship is overtly one of observer as against observed.

3. The observer as participant: this researcher participates as if he or she were an organisational member, and makes no effort to hide his or her scientific role, intentions and observational activities. Although friendship ties can (and often do) form, the researcher is relatively passive in establishing and nurturing ties with organisational members. This might represent a situation used in one-off formal observations.

4. The complete observer: this researcher remains in the background and watches and listens to (a) what others do, (b) what they say, and (c) the circumstances in which these actions and commands occur. As far as possible, the researcher remains unobtrusive, with no social interaction taking place. Complete observation has the advantage of enhancing the purity and quality of data gathered (Symon and Cassell, 1998; Lee, 1999).

These roles meet in the middle where involvement is balanced with detachment, familiarity with strangeness and closeness with distance (Adler and Adler, 1987). Another typology has evolved since these four were first proposed: it comprises the complete-member-researcher, the active-member-researcher, and the peripheral-member-researcher. Observational research roles now tend to include any combination of these roles (Adler and Adler, 1994).

Since Malinowski (1967) suggested that an ethnographer's goal should be to grasp the view point of the native inhabitants of the culture under observation, an expectation has developed that

participant observation would lead to human understanding through the researcher's submersion into a culture (which submersion would include assuming the complete disposition of the native (Tedlock, 2000). In fact, because of the emphasis on an experiential approach it has become commonplace to suggest that a field-worker adopt the stance of a marginal native (Freilich, 1970) or professional stranger (Agar, 1980).

As self-denying emissaries (Boon, 1982) field-workers reveal an ethnography about the social settings they study. They are expected to maintain a polite distance from those studied, and to cultivate rapport, not friendship; compassion, not sympathy; respect, not belief; understanding, not identification; and admiration, not love. If the researcher were to cultivate these feelings we are told he or she would run the risk of taking up complete membership (Adler and Adler, 1987), or going native.

It is important to emphasise that although different forms of participant observation are available to the researcher, he or she should always adopt multiple strategies of data collection (Moore and Savage, 2002).

Participant observation techniques are very much underutilised in management research, though some well-known and exemplary studies exist (Adler and Adler, 1987; Van Maanen, 1982). The potential of these techniques to produce substantial insight through the generation or testing of theory, and more rigorously that one might expect, is too often overlooked. (Lee, 1999).

Of the four classes of participant observation this research utilised the complete observer methodology. The use of this methodology provided rich data on the behaviour of the selected strategic leaders or CEOs.

3.4.7 Stages of observation
Adler and Adler (1994) put forward the following stages of observation:
1. selecting a setting;
2. gaining entrée;

3. beginning the observation;

4. recording the observation;

5. the fifth is distinguishing between the nature of the initial observation and that of the latter observation.

> The nature of researchers' observations inevitably shifts in range and character from the early to latter stages of an observation project. Spradley (1980) saw the initial observations as primarily descriptive in nature, unfocused and general in scope, based on broad questions, and serving to provide a base for the researcher to branch out in numerous future directions. After observers become more familiar with their settings and grasp the key social groups and processes in operation, they may distinguish features of the scenes that most interest them. At this point the observation is likely to become more focused, directing the attention to a deeper and narrower portion of the people, behaviours, times, spaces, feelings, structures, and/or processes. Research questions or problems may emerge that shape future observations and begin the formation of typologies. This stage of observation generates clearer research questions and concepts that then require selected observations. At this point, researchers focus on establishing and refining the characteristics of and relations among the elements that have previously selected as objects of study. Specific questions arise that must be answered in constructing models about the categories within and among things in the setting. Overall, as Spradley (1980) has noted, the stages of observation form a funnel, progressively narrowing and directing researchers' attention deeper into the elements of the setting that have emerged as theoretically and/or empirically essential. (Adler and Adler, 1994)

1. the sixth stage involves achieving theoretical saturation, when the generic features of the new findings consistently replicate the earlier ones;

2. the final stage is analysing data and reaching conclusions. The following points should be noted:

   i. The researchers' earliest analysis of the data is related to existing models in

relevant literature.

ii. Depending on the observers' styles of data analysis, they may engage in more casual theorisation, or more formal theory building.

iii. Observers may move through the stages of research, from open-ended search, to hypothesis formation, to theory conceptualisation.

iv. Observation can yield findings consonant with the context of verification as well, through systematic attention to regular patterns of occurrence and their conditions.

3.4.8 Rigours of observation

Observation, participant observation and unstructured depth interviewing are such that, as researchers obtain greater knowledge and apprehension of the phenomena they are studying, they can alter the problems and questions they are pursuing. This flexibility enables them to gain insight into new realities, or to discover different ways of looking at old realities - processes not possible with more structured research methods. The potential for creativity is, therefore, both a strength and a weakness in observation (Adler and Adler, 1994; Goffman, 1963).

The existence of flexibility may give rise to questions about the validity and consistency of the research process. To ensure rigour of observation, other methods are used in conjunction with observation. The use of other methods provides results that can assist in determining validity and consistency. Further, in observation, unlike in a laboratory, the natural setting, context of occurrence, interviews with subjects and the researcher's own perception of the setting can all be considered hard evidence. These are an alternative source of data that can enhance cross-checking or triangulation, which eliminates, or at least extremely minimises, the impact of research biases (Denzin, 1989). In this research, complete observation, one-on-one discussions, structured interviews, and a review of the CEOs' official diaries were all used as alternative methods. The resultant cross-checking and triangulation substantiated the validity and consistency of the results obtained.

3.5 Ethnographic principles and time in ethnographic research

One of the research design decisions was to determine how much time would be needed in the field to capture the lived experience of CEOs in a valid and reliable manner.

The issue of time is a challenge that has affected many ethnographic researchers. The anthropological method of ethnography demands a long period of time and residency in the field. Different types of pressure act simultaneously upon the researcher in the field - pressure from funding agencies and work commitments, and stress that results from restrictions on access to the subjects (restrictions imposed by the subjects themselves).

Arguments have been put forth that suggest that two years in the field is an adequate standard; while other researchers have argued because of access difficulties, even a year in the field is seen as a luxury. The issue of the cost of spending time in the field has resulted in funders, and self-funders such as the current researcher, wanting quicker results. Funders have not been impressed with arguments suggesting that the amount of time required for ethnography or the use of ethnographic methods should be determined by the researcher him or herself, as the expert in the field (Wolcott, 1995; Jeffrey and Troman, 2004).

There is an argument that, because of the length of time long-term ethnographic field-work requires, this work is more suitable to research students than to tenured academics. A review of classic ethnographies seems to confirm this view: most existing ethnographic research is in the form of doctoral studies that were undertaken full-time. Full-time students are free from other work commitments (Hargreaves, 1967; Ball, 1981; Burgess, 1983; Jeffrey and Troman, 2004).

The time challenges experienced by this researcher during his five years of study are a clear illustration of how ethnographical researchers are affected by the issue of time pressure. This researcher needed to divide his time between his research, his full-time work commitments and his family obligations throughout the five years.

Jeffrey and Troman (2004) responded to the issue of (time) demands by showing that different perspectives of time exist in ethnographic research. They first outlined three ethnographic research principles:

1. Research taking place over time so as to allow a fuller range of empirical situations to be observed and analysed, and to allow for the emergence of contradictory behaviours and perspectives. Time in the field, alongside time for analysis and interpretation, allows continuous reflections concerning the complexity of human contexts;

2. Considering relations between the appropriate cultural, political and social levels of the research site and the agency of the individual, group or community at the research site;

3. Including theoretical perspectives in order to sensitize field research and analysis, provide an opportunity for the use of empirical ethnographic research for the interrogation of macro- and middle-range theories, and develop a new theory.

Next, Jeffrey and Troman (2004) argued that by developing strategies to ensure that these principles were maintained, an ethnographic researcher could vary the time in the field dependent on the required thick description. Drawing exclusively on their own research, but also acknowledging that other ethnographers (discussed above) have used similar time differentiation, they identified three different time modes that they believe exemplify what is common to many ethnographies:

1. a compressed time mode;
2. a selective intermittent time mode; and
3. a recurrent time mode.

Each of these, can stand as distinct research projects, or can be combined into one research project; each also highlights different features of ethnography (Jeffrey and Troman, 2004).

A compressed time mode (a snapshot)

A compressed mode involves a short period of intense ethnographic study during which researchers inhabit a research site almost permanently, for anything from a few days to a month. Researchers live the life of the inhabitants as fully as is possible without prejudicing the research, antagonizing the inhabitants or disturbing the research site itself (Woods, 1986).

There is a great deal of hanging around, soaking up every tiny detail in case it might be of some particular significance in later analysis. The research site's routines, tensions and disturbances are all recorded. Because inhabitants are fully engaged in their daily routines, opportunities for conversations with them are often restricted, and observational field notes are thus a central part of the data. The compressed time mode captures the dynamics of a context, documenting the visible and less tangible social structures and relations.

The observation of so many contexts and interactions in the compressed mode leads to a proliferation of observations and perspectives which need organisation in situ. As alluded to above, one approach is to ensure that early observations and thoughts, recorded in field notes, include full details of every minute of (the) compressed task (Woods, 2000). Another approach is to identify one embracing theme as the research focus. A third method of responding to the proliferation of observational data is to make use of synecdoche, portraying part of a picture as a representation of the whole picture, or vice versa enabling the observer to see life in inanimate objects (Woods, 1996). The portrayed part, from the compressed time slot, provides a representation of a larger picture constructed over longer periods.

The main feature of a compressed ethnographic period is the portrayal of a snapshot in time of a particular site or event - one in which all perspectives are particularly relevant and the interaction of people and context is described in detail. The taking of the

snapshot is often more context-led than interview-dominant, and is similar to that of a critical event (Woods, 1993).

A selective intermittent time mode (zooming in)
The dominant criterion for this time mode is depth of study, entailing progressive focusing (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) for a sustained period. This mode allows for a longer research period, from three months to two years, for example, and great flexibility in relation to the frequency of site visits.

After an initial period of broad familiarisation, the researcher would choose a specific area for investigation, such as curriculum, hierarchies, gender relations, micro-politics or student-teacher relations. Additionally, the researcher would continually be selective about the people with whom he or she spent time. The researcher would aim at gaining the inhabitants' permission to enter the site at any time; encouraging the gradual opening up of areas for access; and establishing the respondents' trust and commitment to the research.

Central to the intermittent time mode is the flexibility and ability of the researcher to follow and observe that which is most compelling as well to focus and to respond to accidental and fortuitous events (Woods, 1996). Just as a cinematographer gradually zooms closer and closer in on their preferred subject, so the researcher adopting the selective intermittent time mode has the freedom to follow a particular empirical or analytical path so as to focus more and more closely on any relevant aspect of a site, discarding avenues that seem less relevant or interesting.

This mode of research combines specific contexts, respondents' interpretations and researcher-respondent discussion and conversation. There is significantly less hanging around than there might be in a compressed approach, where a continuous length of time in the field is stipulated. In fact, although the total amount of time for the research may have been designated in the research design, the time actually spent in fieldwork

and the frequency with which the researcher visits the site(s) would not be determined by the design.

The rate of site visits would depend on the type of relevant events examined, and on the nature of the foci selected by the researcher as the study develops. Site-visit frequency would also be influenced by decisions as to whether the analytical categories have been saturated (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). In other words, there is a far more fluid relationship between the extent of fieldwork and the analysis than in the other two time modes.

A recurrent time mode (documentary)

This is not a snapshot or zooming approach, but rather a documentary approach. The researcher takes the role of the narrative film-maker, comparing the phases of a cycle to identify change and develop authentic narratives through respondent reflection and researcher challenge. The researcher may aim to create a picture by sampling the same temporal phases, for example the beginnings and ends of school terms, celebratory periods such as Christmas, examination periods and inspection periods. In the recurrent time mode temporal phases formalise the research methodology. There is less progressive focusing and less flexibility in the frequency of field visits. The chief objective is to monitor comparison and change.

As with the compressed mode, in the recurrent mode every relevant observational detail is recorded but, unlike the compressed mode, the researcher is able to compare the data with results from previous research visits. The built-in time factor of the recurrent mode allows for an analysis and examination of the relationship between the macro, meso and micro elements of social structures, for example, during times of reform. Systematised recurrent ethnography, particularly when used in a context where people are experiencing unusual and disturbing events, ensures that the respondent and the researcher focus on the passage of time and how this affects the respondent.

Jeffrey and Troman (2004) go on to identify two methodological issues arising from the differentiation of ethnographic time modalities: how to compensate for the lack of extensive time in the field in the compacted mode; and how to resist the familiarity built up over time in the intermittent and recurrent modes.

Researchers engaged in compacted study need to clearly explicate the influence of their subjective engagement, for they may well not have time to collect suitable triangulated data to counter criticisms of researcher bias. However, they are able to use other relevant research studies as a broader context through which they can analyse, interpret and theorise.

Conversely, in the selective intermittent mode the researcher is most susceptible to going native while respondent validation, team critiques and memo writing are ways of resolving this issue (Woods, 1986). The recurrent approach is the least likely to lead to over-involvement, but researchers have to collect extensive data from key informants (Woods, 1986) in order to counter criticism that they only ever consider surface levels of interaction and respondent perspectives. Another concern is that because of its breakdown in time, ethnology could be reduced to mere qualitative research. Fortunately the three ethnographic research criteria identified by Jeffrey and Troman (2004), which have been discussed earlier in this chapter, put paid to this eventuality.

Using the compressed approach researchers would make extensive use of other ethnographies or qualitative studies to allow for the comparison and interrogation of any analysis. The snapshot character of the compressed research mode might make it useful as a pilot for further research. Alternatively, the research might be productive enough to confirm or question contemporary studies.

A research project adopting the selective intermittent approach would benefit from its progressive focus, which is essential to tease out complexities and under-currents, but would need to ensure that the second criterion of analysing the influence of multiple discourses is not marginalised. There is a temptation to become so involved with the minutiae of interactions and relations that other influencing factors such as the relevant political, institutional and cultural discourses and

structures are ignored. It is therefore important to invoke a range of relevant theories to sensitise the data. Theoretical sampling where theories developed during the course of analysis are tested at the research site enforces progressive focusing (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

The recurrent research mode, with its emphasis on systemised field visits and ongoing narrative, may overemphasise distance as researchers focus on following the narrative or recording change and its effects. As a result, researchers may fail to seek out the complex and sometimes contradictory action of people and groups, or to examine differing reactions to change within individuals.

In this research, the understanding of different time modes in ethnography, as well as the reality of the time constraints faced by the researcher (holding down a full-time senior executive position in a leading organisation), led to the fieldwork being structured around the observation of selected critical incidents, and the utilisation of a combination of the first two time modes (the compressed approach and the selective intermittent approach), all under the over-arching umbrella of being a complete observer.

3.5.1 A list of the multiple methods used in this research

The following multiple methods were used in this research:

i.   observations

ii.   analysis of diaries (time utilisation)

iii.   use of NLP based observation templates (after extensive training in NLP methodology)

iv.   one-on-one discussions with each strategic leader before the research began

v.   video-taped sessions of responses to NLP meta-program questions

vi.   use of metaphors and stories to make sense of the rich data

vii.   validation by an independent NLP Master Practitioner of the findings of the research and the evaluation by the researcher of the responses to the NLP meta-program questions

viii. one-on-one discussions with each strategic leader, at different stages of the research

3.6 Limitations to and disadvantages of the ethnographic method of qualitative research

Several disadvantages have been highlighted by researchers.

1. The first is the potential for conflict between researchers' efforts to establish the truth and their possible observation of unethical situations and acts. (Lee, 1999).

2. The second, is the issue of presentational data. When the CEOs are aware that they are a part of a leadership study, they may experience a conscious and unconscious desire to enhance their image through presentational data. Researchers must be particularly cautious in distinguishing between fictionalised images, actions and behaviours and the actual day-to-day operating behaviour of the leader (Conger, 1998).

3. Third, a central postulate of the ethnographic method is that people lie about things that matter most to them. Penetrating fronts, a phrase used with powerful effect by Douglas (1976), becomes one of the more important goals of the competent fieldworker. If the ethnographer can uncover the lie, much is revealed about what is deemed crucial by the individual, group, or organisation. Evasion, too, enters the calculus of deception: it is unfortunately true that most informants are only as good as the questions put to them. (Van Maanen, 1983).

4. Fourth, the intentional and unintentional ways the produced data is presented can be misleading. (Van Maanen, 1983).

5. There is a danger of research being skewed unless a researcher develops self-reflexivity. The researcher cannot be completely independent, a fly on the wall, he or she necessarily becomes part of the research process itself. The researcher who holds his or her own views on a wide range of issues can powerfully influence the research, as will his or her unique demographic characteristics - sex, age, class and race (Blaxter et al., 2001). The study is also affected by the researcher's personal standards of relevance as

to what is and what is not worthy of observation.

The ethnographer must, therefore, be reflexive and attempt to understand how his or her own philosophical views, values, beliefs and prior knowledge underpin the theoretical nature of how sense is made of what is observed. Questions and beliefs about what is to count as knowledge, and an exploration of the researcher's definition of self (and how this affects relationships with the phenomena studied) provide a good basis for developing and making explicit self-reflexivity (Symon and Cassell, 1998).

Clearly, reflexivity demands a level of emotional literacy (understanding one's own values, beliefs, prejudices) on the part of the researcher; this researcher was fully cognisant of the fact that he was a highly educated black male and a foreign national (from not so highly politically and economically regarded Zimbabwe) conducting research among white male business leaders and predominantly white management teams.

He was also aware that, while undertaking the fieldwork and analysing the results, it would be necessary to consider the ways in which his race, nationality, academic level and career background would contribute to the research findings. Nevertheless, this researcher recognises the impossibility of being completely objective, and the associated difficulty in minimising the researcher influence on the research - he appreciates that it may in fact be foolish to try to do so (Blaxter et al., 2001).

An alternative is to consciously recognise and welcome the play of emotions between researcher, the researched and the research, and to embrace the challenge of openly recording the effects.

6. A sixth perceived limitation to the ethnographic method of qualitative research, is the fact that the subjects of observation may influence (intentionally or not) their own behaviours because of the presence of the observer (Symon and Cassell, 1998).

7. There are also ethical dilemmas in the field and paradigm prejudices in the seminar room (Symon and Cassell, 1998). These need to be taken into account when the validity of results is assessed.

8. A problem arises concerning the selective memory of the ethnographic researcher in interpreting, making sense of, and deciding what data to incorporate into the account. Memory retains all experiences, historic and current. In order to make sense of life's experiences the researcher therefore relies on memory, which assumes the role of creator of meaning. The researcher's memory also plays a central part in how recollections are expressed to others or in writing - ethnographers have tended to feel that in conveyance a lot of the original richness and meaning is lost, as perceptual filters and language limitations moderate and dilute the description of the original feelings experience during the research (Simon and Cassell, 1998).

9. A researcher must continually verify the validity of information collected, yet circumstances may change during the course of the research. In order to attain validity under changing circumstances, most researchers adopt a multi-method approach. (Where more than two methods are used the process is referred to as triangulation.) The use of the multi-method approach gives the researcher significant flexibility to change methods should the need arise as the research unfolds. It may be that a new source of information is discovered; or the research question changes as new insights are gained; or access to certain sources of information is prohibited. The multi-method approach enables the researcher to adapt accordingly to changing circumstances (Blaxter et al., 2001).

This researcher adopted a multi-method approach at the outset, combining it with the use of two time modes, compressed and selective intermittent. The researcher's goal in choosing the multi-method approach was to validate the information arising from his methods of complete observation; review of diaries; and a video-taped structured

interview of each participant answering an NLP-based questionnaire designed to elicit the core meta-programmes (mental paradigms) that drive the behaviours of each CEO.

Analysing and comparing the data from the three methods would fulfil the logic of triangulation, which is to compare and contrast the findings from one type of study to another. In this respect the questionnaire and diary reviews were more efficient at determining the large-scale structural features of the phenomenon being studied, while the complete observations revealed details of the process and small-scale behavioural aspects.

10. Perhaps the most significant limitation of qualitative research (ethnography, in this case) is how to justify the knowledge and the results produced by the approach. This is the focus of the next section.

3.7 Researcher subjectivity

Researchers (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) have identified the following requisite proficiencies for doing qualitative research:

1. to step back and analyse situations critically;
2. to recognise and avoid bias;
3. to obtain valid and reliable data; and
4. to think abstractly.

The researcher's day-to-day life skills - reading, writing, listening, talking and thinking are useful research resources. The difference between the researcher and the ordinary person is that the researcher consciously and systematically uses these life skills for the research in a considered professional way (Blaxter et al., 2001).

3.7.1 Prior experience in the field of study

Because ethnography brings together knowledge and significant personal experiences, it could be seen, in the context of this current research, as a subset of autobiography within the study of

the particular phenomenon, strategic leadership (Tedlock, 2000; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Ethnography is the most appropriate research methodology in cases where the researcher has a reasonable level of prior knowledge on the research subject or topic (Tedlock, 2000).

By the time he embarked on the current doctoral studies this researcher had worked in the automotive retail industry, at middle to executive levels of leadership, over a ten year period. He had also completed extensive studies on subjects such as effective human behaviour, the functioning of the brain, and the mind-body phenomenon. He had analysed the levels of success individuals achieve in being able to step back from situations and critically analyse them before deciding how to deal effectively with them. He had grappled with the understanding of the source and causes of emotion, and how to use that knowledge to critically assess situations and make decisions untainted by bias or feelings.

Upon reading Strauss and Corbin (1990), the researcher realised that his participation over time in facilitated courses such as John Kehoe's Mind Power into the 21st Century, Peter Heibloem's Alpha Mind Power and Paul J. Meyer's Dynamics of Personal Goal Setting, as well as his studies in Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP), had equipped him with the essential personal skills required for the undertaking of qualitative research.

A critical skill which would become even more refined over the course of twenty-four months of extensive study was the ability to think abstractly. With a solid grounding in Chartered Accounting, the researcher already possessed the ability to reason and think at both a deeply analytical as well as a highly abstract level. It was his exploration of the field of NLP, however, that exposed him to a new set of abstract thinking skills derived from the core fields of linguistics and psychology. The researcher formalised his study of this field by embarking on facilitated NLP programmes: the Practitioner course, completed in South Africa in October 2004, and the Master Practitioner course completed in the USA in June 2005.

Ethnographic research demands that the researcher reflect upon his or her own role in the research process: this is seen as an indispensable skill (Blaxter et al., 2001). The ability to stand

back and reflect on the research process is also called interpretive awareness: consciously acknowledging and specifically dealing with personal subjectivity instead of ignoring it. If interpretive awareness is properly exercised then reliability is achieved through the strength of interpretation (Sandberg, 1994, 1995; Kvale, 1996). The ethnographic researcher can become consciously determined to move beyond the narrowness of academic knowledge and prior expertise into the richness of the lived experience of the culture under investigation (Tedlock, 2000).

The researcher can achieve interpretive awareness by accepting that the observer and the observed are not entirely separate entities. Rather, they are subjective, experiencing subjects involved in a process of producing knowledge, while at the same time influencing each other. The researcher can also achieve interpretive awareness by developing self-reflexive control. By doing this the researcher removes the focus from him or herself and places it on the subject of the study. He or she thus moves away from cultivating deeper knowledge of the self, towards developing deeper knowledge of the researched subject (Minh-ha, 1989; Tedlock, 2000).

Self-reflexive control and the ability to reflect on what has transpired are everyday skills that this researcher acquired over the ten years preceding his current research. Mastery of NLP technique further strengthened this ability to reflect on, to stand back from and think carefully about what he was or had been doing.

3.7.2 On being a black researcher in a white, male-dominated industry

Ethnographic research of lived experience is an interactive process that occurs between two or more people within a given dynamic environment. It is therefore social, process-orientated and dynamic. Complexity is introduced by the demographical differences of subject and object, that is, race, gender, social class, age and ethnicity. For example, the experience of a black, female Christian researcher would be significantly different in a culture or a study where the subjects are predominantly male, white and Muslim, than in one where the subjects are predominantly female, black and Christian (Tedlock, 2000; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

This researcher was always cognisant of the fact that he was a black researcher studying the lived experience of white, male strategic leaders. His mentor (the chairman of the company) made access to the strategic leaders easy, facilitated his introduction to the selected participants and played a part in providing the performance data. The researcher did not experience any sense of difficulty during the research that he could attribute to the demographical differences with the sample.

3.8 Establishing the validity and reliability of ethnography

There are two key assumptions underlying the analysis of the expected research results:

1. that studying the leadership of the effective CEOs, within the sample, around critical incidents and within the chosen industry, would yield sufficient data to enable significant propositions on the phenomenon being studied to be generated; and

2. that the results and knowledge generated by the research would be valid and justified.

3.8.1 The validity challenge of observational research

Because observational researchers do not have the benefit of members' analysis of their findings, they are obliged to place a significant degree of reliance on their own perceptions, which ushers in a level of possible subjective interpretation bias (Denzin, 1989; Adler and Adler, 1994).

Justifying research results from interpretive approaches is an area of great concern within the methodology. The use of interpretive approaches has increased substantially, but the appropriate criteria for justifying the results has not developed at the same rate, although truth claims are possible if one utilises criteria consistent with the basic assumptions underlying a research approach (Sandberg, 2005).

In the quest to justify knowledge produced, some qualitative methods, which combine theoretical and methodological principles from fundamentally different philosophical traditions, have incorrectly made use of quantitative criteria. This is not consistent with the assumptions underlying the interpretive approaches of ontology and epistemology (Sandberg, 2005; Giorgi,

1994; Morgan, 1983; Van Maanen 1983/ 1995; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

The key assumptions underlying positivistic, quantitative approaches are that subject and object are distinct and separate entities; and that results obtained from one study can be reproduced, that is, reliability established, by another study performed clinically under the very same set of conditions as the first, with variances arising attributed to measurement error (Kvale, 1989; Salner, 1989; Sandberg, 2005).

The interpretive approach does not fit into the science exactness of the positivistic approach because of the nature of the lived experience, the inter-subjectiveness of researcher and research object, and the role of unquantifiable factors, such as autobiography, demographics, life experiences, memories, paradigms and perceptions that are brought to the interaction by both researcher and researched. Results obtained by one qualitative researcher are unlikely to be reproduced by another researcher in the same setting.

3.8.1.1 The lived experience of reality

While the ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying the positivistic tradition refer to an external, objective reality independent of the human mind, the assumptions underlying the interpretive research tradition are rooted in the phenomenological base. This stipulates that person and world are inextricably related through lived experience: the world is an experienced world - a relationship therefore exists between observer and observed (Berger and Luckman, 1996; Gadamer, 1977, 1994; Heidegger, 1992; Husserl, 1962, 1970; Schutz, 1945, 1953; Sandberg, 2005).

Knowledge within interpretive approaches is therefore constituted through lived experience of reality, where observer and observed, subject and object, form an inseparable relation steeped in subjectivity, as opposed to being two independent and distinct entities that then come to relate (Giorgi, 1992; Sandberg, 2005).

Meaning-making therefore plays an important role in interpretive approaches. In experiencing an object, it is not the object itself which is the content of the experience, but rather the meaning which results from the way the object is experienced. The resultant meaning is therefore inseparable from both the object and the individual who experiences it.

Sandberg (2005: p48) argued that "the phenomenological notion of consciousness as intentional (Husserl, 1962, 1970), has fundamental epistemological implications for the interpretive research tradition, where epistemology, the theory of knowledge, refers primarily to three central questions for the researcher; first, how can individuals achieve meaning and thereby knowledge about the reality in which they live? Second, how is this knowledge constituted? Third, under what conditions can the knowledge achieved be claimed as true? In general intentionality means that individuals' consciousness is not closed but open and always directed toward something other than itself."

In formulating the methodology of this research, the researcher therefore had to deal specifically with the notion of meaning-making. If the reality of the phenomenon being studied was the meaning attributed to it, then a conscious effort had to be made to manage the meaning-making process. The researcher underwent in-depth training in the field of Neuro-linguistic Programming where he learnt, among other skills, the ability to distinguish between territory and map - objective reality and the meaning attributed to it.

This skill was indispensable in the observation process as the researcher could constantly and consciously stand back and observe how the self interpreted what the subjects were doing. The researcher managed to minimise bias and so objectively observe what was happening without attributing wrong meaning to it, until sufficient information had been gathered for analysis.

3.8.1.2 Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP): map–territory distinction

According to Tosey, Mathison and Michelli (2005: p145) NLP frameworks appear "to offer possibilities for finer and more specific analysis of subjective experience than is available from other phenomenological methods".

Map-territory distinction in Neuro-linguistic Programming defines people's subjective experience as an internal map, an internal representation of the territory (the object out there). Though there is an intrinsic relationship between the subjective experience and the external object, they are fundamentally different hence the assertion that the map and the territory are different (Korzybski, 1941; Bowman and Targowski, 1987).

People ultimately act according to the way they understand and represent the world, not according to the way the world really is. They live through reality as it is for them after it has been moderated by a matrix of mental filters such as values, beliefs, memories, cultural background and language. As subjects they are always related to objective reality through their internal representation (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic).This is a fundamental process in the NLP Communication model.

This NLP dictum supports the constructivist principle that people create their own reality. In addition, the dictum and NLP focuses more on the form of the creations than on the content; and more on individuals' maps of the world than on the social dimensions (Tosey et al., 2005).

The advocates of interpretive approaches argue that our individual paradigms, comprising of our specific historical, cultural, ideological, gender-based, and language colour our reality, hence we all have a unique experience of lived reality (Husserl, 1962, 1970; Heidegger, 1992; Sandberg, 2005).

In what is a clear parallel with the NLP presupposition that the map is not the territory, where map is the internal meaning ascribed to an external reality and territory is that external reality, the advocates of interpretive approaches also argue that the meaning of reality can never really be determined and in a sense is ever changing (Husserl, 1962, 1970; Heidegger, 1992; Sandberg, 2005).

Ethnographic researchers attribute human behaviour to the meanings given to life's experiences and explain that, fundamentally, this meaning is what generates and drives human behaviour. They argue that ethnography is the only research methodology that enables the researcher to understand the meanings people attribute to the experiences that make up their lives. This occurs as the researcher enters into prolonged interaction with people in their daily lives. Only by doing this can a researcher be exposed to people's beliefs and values (Hammersley, 1992; Tedlock, 2000).

Two types of meaning are pertinent to this research: the meaning which the leaders (CEOs) ascribe to the process of leading (what they do on a daily basis), and the meaning the researcher attributes to the results of the research. Meaning is seen as a subjective experience for both the researcher and the strategic leader. The subject (the strategic leader or the researcher) plays a role in establishing meaning in the process of leading. According to Sandberg (2005), the process of leading transcends the subject (the strategic leader or the researcher). Its appearance is dependent on a subject.

The positivistic and interpretive approaches have two dissimilar ontological and epistemological assumptions. As such, justifying knowledge-production within one tradition by criteria from another tradition would be inconsistent. Sandberg (2005: p46) highlights what could be termed obvious when he says: "How can they (interpretive approaches advocates) justify their knowledge as true if they deny the idea of objective truth? Does not the rejection of objective truth mean that advocates of interpretive research approaches are forever condemned to produce arbitrarily and relativist knowledge? This is unlikely because it does not follow from the rejection of objective truth that we cannot produce valid and reliable knowledge about reality."

The question, then, is how can the knowledge produced from interpretive approaches be justified as valid and reliable? It has been argued that it is quite possible to develop enough assurance that knowledge generated is valid and reliable via a process of rigorously testing the criteria of the knowledge presented (Wachterhauser, 2002).

What is truth and when is it achieved within the interpretive research tradition? Several theories of truth have been proposed that resonate with the assumptions of life-world and intentionality.

3.8.2 Theories of truth

Achieving truth: the difference between the positivistic research tradition and the interpretive research tradition. In the positivistic research tradition, truth is achieved if the researcher's statement (the results obtained) is a representation of objective reality. In the interpretive tradition, however, truth is defined as lived experience: the evidence is in the experience, and not in a relationship between the researcher's statement and an objective reality. Indeed, the researcher experiences that truth that was initially interpreted (Husserl, 1962, 1970; Heidegger, 1992; Lyotard, 1991; Sandberg, 2005).

The positivistic research concept of truth differs from the interpretive research tradition's concept of truth primarily because of the latter's assumption of life-world and the epistemological assumption of intentionality. Phenomenologically, the researcher is intentionally related to the research object, and, as such, meaning-making comes into play again. The truth claim does not refer to an objective reality per se, but to the specific meaning of the research object as it appears to the researcher.

Because truth is confined to the researcher's lived experience of truth, intentional fulfilment is a possible way that the researcher can claim the truth of the knowledge produced. Intentional fulfilment is established when there is accord between the researcher's initial interpretation of the phenomena being studied and the meaning given in lived experience. In other words, if the meaning of the lived experience of the phenomena being studied presents itself to consciousness according to how it was initially interpreted, then truth has been achieved. The researcher's understanding of the phenomena being studied (that is, his or her understanding prior to engaging in field work) serves as the initial interpretation of what the phenomena means to the subjects in the research (Heidegger, 1992).

Initial interpretation in this research comprised two elements: the researcher's knowledge of the role of the strategic leader in commercial organisations; and what each of the strategic leaders in the sample described as their own interpretation of their role within the organisation.

If the researcher reading through his or her field notes experiences a discrepancy between the initial interpretation and the way the phenomenon shows itself to consciousness, then truth would not be evident. However, the researcher has the flexibility to formulate a new interpretation. The researcher would embark upon an iterative process of re-reading the field notes until he or she finds accord between the latest interpretation, and the way the lived experience of the studied phenomenon presents itself to consciousness; only then would truth be achieved (Sandberg, 2005).

With truth as intentional fulfilment, the matching of the initial interpretation with the meaning provided in lived experience occurs within the researcher's lived experience of the studied phenomenon. With the correspondence theory of truth the matching process takes place between two separate entities - that is, between the researcher's statements and an independent research object (Sandberg, 2005).

According to Sandberg (2005) Husserl's truth is achieved through perceived fulfilment and Heidegger's truth through fulfilment in practice (Husserl, 1962, 1970; Heidegger, 1992). When a researcher studies an object and then allows it to appear on its own terms, truth is achieved through perceived fulfilment. But when a researcher lives the experience of the research object in practice, he or she can achieve true knowledge of what the object is: in other words, truth is achieved through fulfilment in practice.

Derrida's deconstruction

Derrida (1984) developed an idea of truth within deconstruction which complements Husserl's and, to some extent, Heidegger's idea of truth. Bernstein (2002) argued that through his numerous deconstructive studies Derrida successfully demonstrated that the meaning of reality is not primarily coherent and unambiguous. Rather, it is fundamentally indeterminate and irresolvable. Given the focus on and belief in irresolvable contradictions and tensions in texts,

deconstruction can be seen to express a theory of truth as indeterminate fulfilment of its meaning; in other words if truth is not able to be seen as indeterminate fulfilment of its meaning, it will not have been properly deconstructed. Derrida (1984: p126) explained, "To deconstruct a text is to disclose how it functions as desire, as a search for presence and fulfilment which is indeterminably deferred".

Sandberg (2005) argued that a constellation of truth within the interpretive research tradition arises from a consolidated view of the theories of truth; Husserl's, Heidegger's, and Derrida's.

3.8.3 The perspectival nature of interpretive truth claims

It is Sandberg's (2005) view that every researcher has an internalised framework for making sense of reality. This framework is made up of the researcher's specific historical, cultural and linguistic understanding of reality, and internalisation is reinforced by education, upbringing and work. In addition, each research approach contains a methodological perspective on the phenomenon being studied that gives rise to a certain interpretation of the results. An ethnomethodological perspective, for instance, may give rise to an ethnographic standpoint. In relation to an interpretive approach, therefore, truth is only meaningful when considered from the researcher's perspective.

The problem with truth being based on different perspectives is that there could be as many truths as there are researchers. A way to manage this is to assess truth claims dealing with the same phenomenon against each other. A process of justification takes place as the limitations and misunderstandings of interpretations are 'corrected'. It is this iterative process, within a certain research perspective as well as between specific research perspectives that can lead to a deeper understanding and new knowledge claims of the investigated phenomena (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Sandberg, 2005). Truth achieved within interpretive approaches will always be an ongoing and open process of knowledge claims correcting each other.

The validation procedures relating to collaborative inquiry seem to provide part of the solution to the challenge of truth being based on different perspectives . In collaborative inquiry critical

evaluation, and thus validity, is enabled through both reflective dialogue between researcher and subject and the soliciting of independent third-party perspectives on the data and their interpretation (Tosey et. al, 2005). In this research validity was gained when an independent, highly qualified third-party specialist in the field of Neuro Linguistic Programming evaluated the research information produced and reached similar conclusions as the researcher.

3.8.4 Truth constellation of criteria

Earlier, the researcher posed the question: how can the knowledge produced from interpretive approaches be justified as valid and reliable? A potential answer can be found in Sandberg's (2005) proposal of a truth constellation, consisting in truth as perceived fulfilment, fulfilment in practice, and indeterminate fulfilment. Sandberg put forward three criteria for the justification of knowledge produced by means of interpretive approaches: communicative validity is proposed as a criterion for establishing truth as perceived fulfilment; pragmatic validity is identified as the criterion for establishing truth as fulfilment in practise; and transgressive validity is suggested as an appropriate criterion for establishing truth as indeterminate fulfilment.

Communicative validity is associated with the Husserlian notion of perceived fulfilment. The extent to which the researcher has achieved a truth claim can be justified during at least three phases of the research process.

> In the researcher's initial phase of generating empirical material, communicative validity can be achieved by the establishment of what Apel (1972) called a community of interpretation. According to Apel, the production of valid knowledge claims presupposes an understanding between researcher and research participants about what they are doing. During the phase where empirical material such as interview transcripts are analysed, the researcher can achieve communicative validity by striving for coherent interpretations.

> The principle of coherence is based on the notion of the hermeneutic circle (Palmer, 1972), which stipulates that interpretation is constituted by a circular relation between

parts and whole. In other words, a text can be understood only in relation to its parts and, conversely, the parts can be understood only in relation to the whole text. The achievement of coherence would mean that the parts of a text fit the whole and the whole fits the parts. The researcher can employ this coherence strategy to judge conflicting interpretations by how consistent they are with the empirical material. The greater the number of parts of the empirical material that accord with a specific interpretation, the more coherent the interpretation is.

Finally, during the phase of discussing his or her findings with other researchers and professionals in the practice being investigated, the researcher can also establish communicative validity. Gadamer (1994) argued that truth is to a large extent achieved through dialogue between people. Although single researchers may be the main producers of knowledge claims, it is ultimately inter-subjective judgement that determines whether the original researcher's knowledge claim is true.

The view of truth as inter-subjective can be traced back to the phenomenological idea of life-world. Sandberg (2005) explains that phenomenography is an interpretive approach that was originally developed within education to describe qualitatively different ways in which people understand or make sense of their world (Marton, 1981; Marton and Booth, 1997). Life-world is not only subjectively, but also inter-subjectively, constituted through ongoing negotiations with others about its meaning. Hence, through discussion with different communities of interpreters, knowledge claims can be refined or challenged as limited.

Pragmatic validity counters a significant disadvantage inherent in communicative validity. Although communicative validity enables one to check the coherence of interpretation, it does not focus adequately on the potential discrepancies between what people say they do, and what they actually do. Research participants do not describe their lived experience in an undistorted way, as Alvesson (2003) has indicated their accounts are mediated via impression management, political action, moral story-telling, social codes, and cultural scripts. Pragmatic validity, which involves

testing knowledge produced in action (Kvale, 1989) counters the inadequacy of communicative validity in these circumstances. It can be an appropriate criterion for judging the extent to which truth has been achieved according to a Heideggerian fulfilment in practice.

Using pragmatic validation as part of the research process may thus increase the researcher's chance of capturing knowledge in action, and avoid the danger of espousing new theories (Argyris and Schon, 1978).

A further way to validate researcher's interpretations pragmatically is through participant observation. In many anthropological studies on foreign cultures, anthropologists not only carry out interviews and collect various documents but also live and actively participate in the culture.

Transgressive validity proposed by Lather (1993, 1995) and Richardson (1995) could be seen as an appropriate criterion for judging the extent to which truth as indeterminate fulfilment has been achieved. The primary aim of transgressive validity is to help researchers become aware of their taken-for-granted frameworks. It has been argued that communicative and pragmatic validity are appropriate criteria for justifying the extent to which truth has been achieved according to perceived fulfilment and fulfilment in practice respectively. However, these criteria tend to encourage the researcher to look primarily for consistent and unequivocal interpretations of the lived experience, and in so doing overlook various forms of ambiguity, complexity, and multiplicity in the lived experience. Truth as indeterminate fulfilment can help the researcher to pay more attention to irresolvable contradictions and tensions.

Lather (1993) suggested three ways in which transgressive validity can be achieved. One is to make people aware of the codes that guide them towards making certain interpretations, by using irony to disturb those present interpretations. Another is to search for differences and contradictions rather than coherence in lived experience. Cross-checking of interpretation leads to clearer result formulations - differences and contradictions sought until a point is reached where, despite further cross-checking, the understanding of the studied phenomena remains stable (Sandberg, 2005) .

The third way in which transgressive validity can be achieved is related to the fact that the scientific framework for producing knowledge within the Western culture is often moulded by and saturated within a male imagery. As a consequence, the female imagery in terms of specific lived experience and ways of being is to a large extent excluded. Through systematically recognizing not only male but also female lived experience, transgressive validity can be achieved.

These validity criteria allow the truth theories within the proposed truth constellation to correct each other. While communicative validity focuses on meaning coherence between the initial interpretations and the empirical material investigated, it does not adequately check discrepancies between what the research participants say they do, and what they actually do. Pragmatic validity and communicative validity, on the other hand, do not pay enough attention to possible contradictions; and the strong focus of transgressive validity on contradictions and tensions makes it ill-suited to coherent interpretations. Thus the self-correcting mechanism can be put into operation: pragmatic validity can counter the weakness in communicative validity, transgressive validity can respond to the weakness in both communicative and pragmatic validity, and finally communicative and pragmatic validity can counter the weakness in transgressive validity (Sandberg, 2005).

3.8.5 Justifying knowledge within interpretive approaches

While validity relates to the truthfulness of interpretations, reliability relates to the procedure by which truthful interpretations are achieved. It follows, logically, that validity only comes into play if reliability is guaranteed. Within positivistic approaches reliability is centred around replicability and the interjudge reliability of results relating to objective reality. Within interpretive approaches the proposed truth constellation can be utilised as the criteria of reliability. The truth constellation implies first and foremost that researchers must demonstrate how they have dealt with their intentional relation to the lived experience studied. In other words, researchers must demonstrate how they have controlled and checked their interpretations throughout the research process, from formulating the research question, selecting individuals to be studied, undertaking field-work with

those individuals, analysing the data obtained, and reporting and writing the results (Sandberg, 2005).

Sandberg (2005) saw the following as appropriate criteria for justifying knowledge produced within interpretive approaches:

- communicative validity;

- pragmatic validity;

- transgressive validity; and

- reliability as interpretive awareness.

A specific research strategy is required if these criteria are to be achieved (Sandberg, 2005).

Miles and Huberman (1994) confirmed the importance of justifying the production of knowledge throughout the research process and suggested a strategy consisting of:

- checking for representativeness;

- checking for researcher effects;

- triangulation;

- weighting evidence;

- checking the meaning of outliers;

- using extreme cases;

- following up surprises;

- looking for negative evidence;

- running if-then tests;

- replicating a finding; and

- checking out rival explanations.

However, it has been argued that the above tactics were developed within the positivistic research tradition and did not adequately steer clear of this tradition to provide an adequate response to the needs of the interpretive approaches (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Sandberg, 2005). Instead of adjusting these positivistic-based tactics to interpretive research, the

phenomenological epoche was proposed as a suitable strategy for providing the required criteria of reliability. The phenomenological epoche was said to underlie most forms of phenomenology, including Derrida's deconstruction (Sandberg, 1994; 2005).

Instead of ignoring all previous knowledge and experiences, the phenomenological epoche brackets that which is relevant to the phenomena at hand. This enables the researcher to enter into a state of objectivity when interpreting lived experience. Examining before judging and suspending judgement until all evidence is collected requires a high level of objectivity (Ihde, 1977; Giorgi, 1990; Sandberg, 2005).

NLP and the phenomenological epoche share the key interpretive process of moving the researcher out of subjective interpretation and into a position of mere observation of external occurrences. The NLP concept of sensory acuity has as its fundamental presupposition the researcher's ability to be non-judgemental, and to observe what is happening out there without bringing his or her irrelevant subjective experience to bear on the experience.

As has been mentioned, this researcher employed NLP methodology when inquiring into subjective experience and reality of the subjects. "The contribution of NLP is as a structured and systematic means of mapping that subjective experience" (Tosey, Mathison, Michelli, 2005: p143).

3.8.6 Using the phenomenological epoche as a strategy for achieving validity and reliability in interpretive studies

In order to achieve the proposed truth criteria in the research process Sandberg (2005) using Ihde's (1977) phenomenological epoche variation generated five steps as the process guidelines:

1) The first step implies that the researcher should always be well-orientated toward how the research object appears throughout the research process. This would enable the researcher to be attentive and open to the potential variations and complexities of the lived experience In this research the researcher tried to achieve communicative validity by constantly being orientated toward the ways in which strategic leadership appeared to the strategic leaders.

He attempted to achieve pragmatic validity by asking questions that encouraged strategic leaders to elaborate on their experience of strategic leadership in practical situations (leadership philosophy).

2) The second step toward achieving the proposed truth criteria throughout the research process, implies that the researcher's orientation be toward describing what makes up the experience under investigation, rather than toward finding explanations for why it appears as it does. Sandberg (2005) explained that when researchers go beyond what is within the observed experience they resort to using existing theories to explain what they observed. To guard against this, and in line with NLP's observation techniques, this researcher constantly to ask himself 'what' and 'how' questions rather than why questions (Gubrium and Holstein, 2000; Sandberg, 1994). In NLP terminology what and how questions encourage an 'uptime state' of observation, where the focus is on what is being observed, while 'why' questions encourage a 'downtime state' where the focus is on the researcher's internal experiences, theories and prejudices. 'What' and 'how' questions foster a describing orientation, and restrict interpretations that exceed the lived experience investigated. In every instance, therefore, the researcher sought to check all interpretations in order to ensure alignment and grounding within the unfolding understanding of the phenomena being studied.

3) The third step involves horizontalisation – the initial treatment of all aspects of the lived experience under investigation as equally important. This is critical in both collection and data analysis. The assumption that some aspects are more important than others is likely to distract the researcher from a truthful interpretation of his or her experience.

4) The fourth step toward achieving the proposed truth criteria throughout the research process implies a search for structural features, or the basic 'meaning-structure', of the experience under investigation. This step is particularly important in the achievement of communicative validity in data analysis. Within philosophical phenomenology, this step is carried out through the method of free imaginative variation. In empirical interpretive approaches, free imaginative variation implies that the stability of the first tentative interpretation of individuals'

lived experience must be checked. The researcher does this by adopting different interpretations in each of his or her subsequent data readings, until the basic meaning-structure of the lived experience under investigation has been stabilised. This step is also central to the achievement of transgressive validity in the analysis. Transgressive validity is achieved through a process of cross-checking the interpretation of each (leaders') understanding. Cross-checking enables the researcher to formulate more precise and clear interpretations of the (leaders') ways of understanding leadership.

5) The final step implies that the use of intentionality as a correlational rule consists of three separate, but internally related, phases.
   a) The first phase involves identifying what the individuals experience as their reality.
   b) The second phase is to identify how the individuals experience their reality.
   c) The final phase is to integrate the individuals' ways of experiencing with what they experience as their reality.

Relying heavily on Sandberg's (2005) approach to a study at Volvo, this researcher , tried to grasp the leaders understanding of strategic leadership by reading each transcript several times, then re-reading them all again, and then analysing all the transcripts in terms of how each leader understood strategic leadership. The researcher's primary focus was on how the strategic leaders delimited and organised what they understood as strategic leadership. Finally the researcher analysed all transcripts again, simultaneously focusing on what each strategic leader understood as strategic leadership in relation to how they lived the experience of strategic leadership.

The phenomenological epoche increases the interpretive approach researcher's chance of achieving the proposed criteria for justifying the knowledge produced. Each of the epoche steps outlined above is a gradual specification of how validity within the truth constellation can be achieved. Researchers should, however, be aware that entering into the phenomenological epoche is not a guarantee that phenomena being studied will appear on its own conditions to the researcher; the researcher's subjectivity still plays a role in interpretation (Sandberg, 2005).

3.8.7 Triangulation as an alternative to validation

Most qualitative research projects adopt the multi-method approach in an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomena being studied (Brewer and Hunter, 1989; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Where two or more methods are used, the process of triangulation is adopted to verify the validity of the data collected. Triangulation has been highly encouraged, but it should not be seen as a complete strategy for validation -it is an alternative process that adds rigor, breadth, and depth to the study (Denzin, 1989; Blaxter et. al, 2001).

The qualitative researcher using the multi-method approach has the flexibility to change direction during the research project if one method is not generating sufficient data for a substantive understanding of the studied phenomena; or if warranted change in the research question justifies a change in methodology, or, indeed, if new insights demand a change in direction.

In line with the above thinking, at the outset this researcher chose a multi-method approach, and combined it with the use of two of the time modes (compressed and selective intermittent). The multi-method approach was to be an alternative process to validate the information arising from the complete observation. The methods, which have already been discussed above, included:

- complete observations;
- review of diaries; and
- a video-taped structured interview of each participant using an NLP-based questionnaire designed to elicit the core meta-programs (mental paradigms) that drive the behaviours of each CEO.

Analysing and comparing the data from the three methods fulfilled the logic of triangulation, which is to check the findings of one type of study with another. In this respect the questionnaire and diary reviews were more efficient at determining the large-scale structural features of the phenomenon being studied, while the complete observations were more revealing of the process and the small-scale behavioural aspects.

3.9 Ethical issues in ethnography

The history of ethnographic research is marred by two controversies – the Malinowski controversy and the psychiatric ward controversy. They led to a deep exploration of the ethics and authority issues of the researchers in the field of ethnography (Tedlock, 2000).

3.9.1 The Malinowski controversy

In a review of his posthumously published ethnographic field diary, A diary in the Strict Sense of The Term (1967), Bronislaw Malinowski, the self-proclaimed inventor of participant observation, was exposed as a racially prejudiced individual steeped in imperialist ideas and colonialist practices, who hardly participated in the culture in which he declared himself an expert. A positive result of this was a new level of critical self-consciousness among ethnographic researchers of their own prejudices and ethical, political and racial backgrounds. Ethnographic researchers began also to be critically conscious of their level of involvement (or lack thereof) in the cultures in which they lived and about which they wrote (Tedlock, 2000).

3.9.2 The psychiatric ward controversy

The second major controversy exploded when an essay entitled: "On Being Sane in Insane Places" (Rosenhan, 1973) revealed how several researchers feigned insanity, had themselves admitted into a psychiatric ward, and carried out covert research. Clinicians greeted the publication of the research with outrage: they accused the researchers of having fabricated the data, although in reality they had not.

The result of the furore was a general shunning of and shifting away from covert participant observation. It was deemed unethical within realms of observation participation where the researcher experiences and sees both himself or herself and other as involved within the ethnographic scene of encounter. It also led to a major representational transformation, in which the ethnographer's narrative frame could present both self and other as parties to the lived experience, with a specific focus on the process and character of the ethnographic dialogue (Tedlock, 1991, 2000).

3.10 Narrative ethnography - writing styles in ethnography

The exploration of ethical issues in ethnographic research resulted in a complete shift in representation away from the memoir centred on self, and/or the life history or monograph focusing on the other (Tedlock, 2000). Researchers moved towards including both self and other in one writing, so that the writing carried a multiplicity of dialoguing voices.

Tedlock (2000) argued that a key difference between a traditional ethnographic monograph and a first-person fieldwork account is that more is usually learnt about the phenomena being studied in the latter writing style. This is because the ethnographic researcher seems to adopt a different attitude when including himself in the ethnography "In fact, as Peter Riviere (1980) has pointed out, we learn rather more about the Panare in Dumont's first-person account than we do in Dumont's monograph" (Tedlock, 2000: p465).

Tedlock (2000:p465) also demonstrated the difference in substance, life-essence and quality between the monograph and the first-person account using an example of author Nigel Barley, who "released his ethnographic monograph and fieldwork account simultaneously. The monograph, Symbolic Structures: An exploration of the Culture of the Dowayos (1983b) is a Levi-Straussian structuralist study. The first-person ethnographic field account, Adventures in a Mud Hut (1983a), is a funny, warts-and-all, first-person narrative of Barley's West African fieldwork".

According to Tedlock (2000), changes in the demographics of both reader and ethnographic researcher groups have been the primary driver of the shifts in the ethical and encoding practises of ethnography. The result has been the emergence of narrative ethnography. The ethics of the Malinowski era, the prejudices and the colonialist tendencies that surfaced when cultures where studied, have all been challenged as the demographics of new ethnographic researchers, middle and lower-class individuals, females, minority and developing world scholars, have forced the issues of class, race, culture, and gender beliefs and behaviours of both the inquirers and subjects of the inquiry into the light. Participant observation has become the observation of participation, with narrative ethnography claiming centre stage.

In this researcher's experience of writing up his fieldwork he has found it more meaningful at times to write in a first-person mode, and to include himself in the ethnographic account.

3.11 How does one observe? Using Neuro Linguistic Programming as a methodology for observing subjective experience

One of the challenges this researcher faced when entering the ethnographic scene and beginning to observe, was to successfully refrain from attributing incorrect meaning to what was being observed, and to avoid passing judgement before sufficient information had been gathered for analysis. This researcher had to find an objective way to masterfully suspend all judgement until the results were in. The researcher needed to utilise all of the adult skills he possessed in the task of observing while minimising subjective bias from personal experiences.

This researcher identified that Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) tools enabled him to achieve the mental and emotional state conducive to focusing objectively on what was happening out there, outside his own personal reflections and subjective experience that could the observation. Tosey, Mathison and Michelli (2005) used NLP as a methodology for inquiring into subjective experience. This, they argued, was the original function of NLP. Two of the three academic researchers (Tosey and Mathison) are trained in NLP and are active researchers in the field.

Thompson, Courtney, Dickson (2002) reported on a longitudinal study of the effect of NLP training on performance. Four psychometric measures, positively linked to performance, were tracked from the beginning to the end of the course. Three of these showed increases during the course. Thompson et al., (2002) argued that NLP helps a person to understand themselves as well as others and also teaches how to communicate effectively with others in order to build better relationships with them; it is also a process that assists in understanding the subjective experience of both the researcher and the researched. It has also been argued by Tosey and Mathison (2003) that NLP, while it attends to communication skills, is a form of modelling that offers potential for systematic and detailed understanding of people's subjective experience.

This researcher utilised his knowledge of NLP both as a basis for observation as well as a basis for building good relationships with the five strategic leaders in the sample.

It is argued that the current research into the phenomenon of the lived experience of the strategic leader is also phenomenological in the sense that it focuses on the subjective experience and constructed reality of the participants. NLP's contribution, as part of the multi-method approach, is that it affords the researcher a structured and systematic means of mapping that subjective experience (Tosey et al., 2005).

Tosey et al. (2005) argued that while NLP was a methodology, it was not a recognised research method, and as such their use of it was an innovation. The researchers argued that NLP enabled them to gain deeper insight into the lived experience of a studied phenomenon, and that NLP as a framework assisted them in mapping changes in the subject's world view. The NLP models they utilised were (Tosey et al., 2005):

i.   the meta model, which classifies language patterns based on the theory of transformational grammar;
ii.   Dilts' neurological levels model, which is derived from Bateson's (1973) notion of levels of learning; and
iii. Metaphor and symbol.

This researcher underwent training in Neuro Linguistic Programming at both the Practitioner (entry level) and Master Practitioner (advanced) levels. This in-depth training equipped him with the observational skills that enabled him to more effectively observe what CEOs did and how they did it. The researcher adopted the following NLP tools and processes as part of his toolkit for observation:

i.   the meta-program questionnaire based on NLP meta-programs (appendix 1 and appendix 2)
ii.   meta-states analysis (appendix 3 and appendix 4)
iii. Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic (VAK) Patterns (appendix 5)

3.11.1 The history and origin of NLP

While NLP has received little attention in academic research or publishing to date it nevertheless has abundant source materials primarily from by and from those in the NLP community (Tosey and Mathison, 2003).

Neuro Linguistic programming (NLP) is a set of techniques, axioms and beliefs that adherents use primarily as an approach to personal development. NLP was influenced by the ideas of the New Age era as well as a belief in human potential. The initial ideas of NLP were developed around 1973 by a student called Richard Bandler and a professor of linguistics, John Grinder, under the tutelage of anthropologist, social scientist, linguist and cyberneticist Gregory Bateson at the University of California, Santa Cruz, during the 1960s and 1970s. The term Neuro Linguistic Programming denotes a set of models and principles meant to explore how mind and neurology (neuro), language patterns (linguistic), and the organisation of human perception and cognition into systemic patterns (programming) interact to create subjective reality and human behaviour.

The methodology developed by Bandler and Grinder (1979, 1983) became known as human modelling. Models were built that illustrated how people accomplish something, how they accomplish anything, in fact. The modelling process usually focused on a person who was extremely skilled at a particular thing (the thing under study). Each important process undergone by the person was identified and described. This was in line with the notion that, if you want to teach a particular skill, you first find someone whose skill in that area is very highly developed. You ask him or her many questions about what they do, why they do it, what works and does not, and so on. In other words, you study the person's thought process and internal experience. You also observe the person in action, as this often results in the formulation of new and better questions.

Most of us follow this process already, though perhaps not systematically. With specific NLP technology we are able to discover much of what a human model does that he or she is not aware of.

During their early studies, Bandler and Grinder (1979, 1983) developed a unique system of asking questions and gathering information that was based on the fields of transformational grammar and general semantics. Later, they together with their colleagues, discovered certain minimal cues given by people that indicate very specific kinds of thought processes. These include eye movements, certain gestures, breathing patterns, voice tone changes, and even very subtle signals such as pupil dilation and skin colour changes. (NLP practitioner training develops the skills needed to exercise the information-gathering techniques and to notice and interpret the subtle cues).

In the first modelling projects, Grinder and Bandler (1979, 1983) modelled three individuals - Fritz Perls (Gestalt Therapy), Virginia Satir (Family Therapy) and Milton H. Erickson (Ericksonian Hypnosis). The three were considered highly competent in their field, and the consistent patterns and approaches they appeared to use became the basis of NLP. Grinder and Bandler analysed their speaking patterns, voice tones, word selection, gesticulations, postures, and eye movements, and related this information to each participant's internal thinking process. The findings of these projects have been widely used and integrated into many other fields, from health and disability to law enforcement, hypnotherapy and coaching.

Using NLP techniques, this researcher has identified five individuals who are considered highly competent leaders of their organisations. By observing them he seeks to understand what it is they do. Essentially, the observation will be a modelling project, and will involve analysing the speaking patterns, voice tones, word selection, gesticulations, postures, and eye movements of these individuals, and relating this information to each participant's internal thinking process.

In this study the researcher depended primarily upon observation of the minimal cues given by people that indicate very specific kinds of thought processes. At a later stage in the fieldwork, and after attending the NLP Master Practitioner course, the researcher interviewed each participant, with the approval of the course supervisor, using a structured NLP questionnaire. The results were used to demonstrate the validity of the results obtained using observation.

Most of the techniques that are commonly grouped together as NLP can be traced back to the early published works of the co-founders and the developers who surrounded them in the 1970s. Bandler and Grinder took an immersion approach to learning, and would step into the shoes of successful people and learn how they did what they did. They would imitate these people without an initial concern for understanding. This concept was carried through into their change work.

Their first published model, the Meta Model, was an approach to change based on responding to the syntactic elements in a client's language. The approach gave Bandler and Grinder information about the limits to the client's model of the world. Gregory Bateson (who wrote the forward to the first NLP book) was impressed with the early work in NLP and introduced the co-founders to Milton Erickson. Bateson became quite influential in the development of the people behind NLP, and provided many of the field's intellectual foundations.

Bandler and Grinder in turn became immersed in the world of Erickson and were given full access to his work. They developed and published the Milton model based on Erickson's hypnotic language, therapeutic metaphors and other behavioural patterns, such as pacing and leading in to build rapport. Erickson and the co-founders shared the idea that conscious attention is limited, and thus worked on engaging the willing attention of the unconscious mind through the use of metaphor and other hypnotic language patterns.

In the 1960s and 1970s general semantics had an influence over several schools of thought. This led to a viable human potential industry and associations with emerging New Age thinking. Human potential seminars, such as those of Esalen in California, began to attract people. Initially

Neuro Linguistic Programming attracted mostly therapists, but over time, it caught the attention of business people, sales people, artists, and New-agers. As NLS expanded, Cameron-Bandler, DeLozier, Dilts and Gordon made further contributions and the seminars of Bandler and Grinder were transcribed into a book called Frogs into Princes. The book became popular and demand for seminars, fast becoming successful human potential attractions, increased.

The NLP pioneers published several beliefs and presuppositions that are still used in NLP training today, and that were originally designed to bring together some of the patterns shared by the successful therapists and experts in communication. Most of the beliefs and suppositions stem from Bateson and Korzybski's ideas that:

- the map is not the territory;
- multiple descriptions promote choice and flexibility; and
- people organise personal resources (states, outcomes, beliefs) effectively in order to change themselves and achieve outcomes.

Even a seemingly negative behaviour is considered in NLP to be an attempt on the part of the individual to fulfil some positive intention of which they may not be consciously aware.

The presuppositions listed above are extremely useful in change contexts, as they serve to empower the recipients by opening up their insights into more options to respond to challenges.

The successful use of all NLP methods and techniques, for example, anchoring and representational systems, calls for the development of superb sensory acuity and calibration skills; a great aid in participant observation.

Focusing on language patterns and body language cues derived from the observation of several world-renowned therapists, the NLP practitioners tackled issues such as how subjective reality

drives beliefs, perceptions and behaviours and subsequently, how behaviours change, transforming beliefs.

The techniques distilled from these observations were metaphorically described by the original developers as therapeutic magic, and NLP itself was described as the study of the structure of subjective experience. The techniques are predicated upon the principle that all behaviours, whether excellent or dysfunctional, are not random, but have a practically determinable structure. NLP has been applied to a myriad of fields, such as sales, psychotherapy, communication, education, coaching, sport, business management and interpersonal relationships, and to other areas such as seduction and spirituality.

This researcher chose to undergo NLP training at both a Practitioner and Master Practitioner level primarily to equip himself with the observation skills that NLP offers. Practitioners commonly use NLP as a therapeutic process in situations where, by means of intervention tools, they facilitate a subject's shift from a current state (current observation) to a desired state. This research is not a therapeutic intervention, however. Its purpose is to observe and understand the participants' subjective experience without seeking to effect any changes in behaviour.

Due in part to its open-ended philosophy, NLP is on the one hand controversial; while on the other hand there exists a wide range of credible bodies worldwide that have expressed strongly worded support for its use, if taught by a skilled and competent trainer and if used appropriately.

3.11.2 NLP's philosophical stance

NLP is sometimes described as an empirical epistemology. That is, it is a way of knowing, with evidence obtained by experiment and observation rather than results derived from an overall theory. It is eclectic, it draws heavily on results from other fields if they appear useful - and it acts as a synthesis in the sense that it is silent about any pre-specified purpose or application, leaving that ultimately to the end user(s) to decide. As such, it is about the study of processes or form,

rather than content. Tosey and Mathison (2003) argued that the key theory of NLP pertained to its methodological nature that is strongly and consistently based on systemic epistemology.

NLP was developed in answer to why particular psychotherapists were so effective with their patients. Rather than explore this question in terms of psychotherapeutic theory and practice, Bandler and Grinder sought to analyze what the therapists were doing at an observational level, categorize it, and apply the categories as a general model of interpersonal influence. NLP seeks to instruct people to observe, make inferences, and respond to others, as did the three original, very effective therapists (Bandler and Grinder, 1979, 1983)

NLP's approach and philosophy are described as being closer to a technology than a science. NLP is also compared with engineering in the sense that it tries to answer what works? rather than what is true? Ultimately, its ideal end-products are systematised models and usable approaches, rather than beliefs or facts. Its approach and philosophy and the endeavour to answer: what works, makes NLP the most appropriate observation technology for the researcher seeking to answer the research question, what do effective leaders do?

The original developers claimed not to be interested in theory, and NLP teaches a practitioner to focus on what works. However, this in no way prevents practitioners from creating and promoting their own theories behind NLP. Some have done this, basing theories upon a synthesis of core observable NLP and personal, psychological, New Age, and/or neurological concepts. Some trainers teach these theories as part of NLP.

This researcher selected NLP because of its ability to focus on what works. NLP is an observation tool that empowers the researcher to notice what is happening in great detail and with high accuracy. The researcher's choice was premised on the claims of the original developers, and not on NLP's theoretical grounding. NLP trainers do not teach the scientific method for assessing whether a change process is effective. They teach the observance of subtle

verbal and non-verbal cues. It is implicit that there is no certainty in any given method, and that flexibility is key.

3.11.3 NLP's self-declared scope

NLP does not recognise any ultimate mediator in the structure and organisation of subjective human thought, except the senses, sensory representations, and human neurology and physiology. At the same time, it does not place a limit on what may be represented within or by those systems, possibly by synaesthesia (the experience of a form of sensation within a different sensory system).

3.11.4 Goals of NLP

A person who seeks change treads a path through an unfamiliar landscape, toward a goal which they sense they desire, but in some way lack the means to reach. The role of the coach or other is to learn heuristically about the person's exploration and guide them in a useful manner. They are to provide help in terms of alternative paths, the desirability of present goals and their perception   of   the   landscape.

The function of NLP goes a step beyond this analogy: NLP provides a general philosophy and approach, together with tools and methodologies, that will assist a competent guide to fulfil his or her role generatively and optimally, in any completely different personal landscape that is robust despite the immense variables inherent in people, psychologies and circumstances.

3.11.5 NLP and science

Scientifically speaking, NLP is a protoscience - a body of purported knowledge that is still being evaluated by the scientific community. Reports on NLP range from those declaring that it has no benefit, to those arguing its significant advantages. Yet other reports conclude that NLP shows

evidence of 'something', but that further study is required to determine where it stands with reference to scientific standards.

In the present study NLP is not the major method of data collection, but one of several tools used to understand what successful leaders do.

In terms of the sciences, NLP bears the closest relationship to the two major cognitive science findings of abstract concepts being largely metaphorical and the mind being inherently embodied (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 1999).

NLP developer Robert Dilts (1983) explains neural functioning in relation to the adding of new connections, Hebbian cell assemblies (Hebbian engrams), causal loops and digital circuitry. Dilts states that when we undergo learning experiences, new neural networks, which record events and their associated meaning, are imprinted in our brains and also that these same imprints could later be re-imprinted or reprogrammed.

Hemispheric differences (brain lateralisation) provide support for NLP assumptions. Robert Dilts (1983) proposes that eye movements and sometimes gestures correspond to specific regions in the brain, and to visual/auditory/kinesthetic representation systems. For example, the left side of the brain is said to be more logical or analytical than the right side, while the right is considered more creative or imaginative. The brain is also seen to have specialized regions for certain functions such as mathematics or language. The understanding of hemispheric differences is critical to the observer seeking to learn about human behaviour through eye movement patterns: the observer is able to identify what side of the brain is being used at any specific time.

3.12 Linking ethnography and NLP

One of the requirements of justifying the research design of this study is establishing a link between NLP and ethnography. The act of noting phenomenon by way of the observation of human behaviour, including participant observation, has been argued as the bedrock source of human knowledge (Adler and Adler, 1994). Neuro Linguistic Programming is a study of human subjectivity. Its core function is to help the researcher get close to human experience by using all

sensory evidence available. In observation, all human senses are engaged, and all human faculties are actively used to obtain impressions of the surrounding world and the phenomena being studied (Adler and Adler, 1994). NLP is therefore best suited as a methodology to assist the researcher in optimising the use of the human senses during observation.

Tosey et al. (2005) successfully demonstrated the value of NLP as a methodology, a way of inquiry, and an analytical perspective that provided deeper insight into subjective experience, and therefore into phenomena being studied ethnographically.

NLP equips the ethnographic researcher with the skills to be able to observe with skill the lived experience of the phenomenon being studied. Ethnographers can therefore, reach a better understanding of the beliefs, motivations, and behaviours of their subjects, using NLP, than they can by using any other method (Tedlock, 2000). NLP is the only methodology that this research could find that offered a holistic set of tools and techniques that would best assist in the process of observing the lived experience of the strategic leaders.

3.13 Choosing the sample

This researcher used the following criteria in choosing his sample:

- The total number of participants needed to be five;
- The tenure of the CEO had to be at least five years;
- The financial performance of the organisation had to be above the industry benchmark.
- The organisation had to be from the Automotive Retail Sector of South Africa.

3.13.1 Deciding on the number of participants

Mintzberg (1990:p164)) carried out "research on how various managers have spent their time. In some studies, managers were observed intensively; in a number of others, they kept detailed diaries; in a few studies, their records were analysed. All kinds of managers were studied – foremen, factory supervisors, staff managers, field sales managers, hospital administrators,

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presidents of companies and nations, and even street gangs. These managers worked in the United States, Canada, Sweden, and Great Britain." Mintzberg did not restrict his sample to the business world, but involved many that could be considered managers within their own field.

Mintzberg's total sample included:

- five chief executives;
- 56 U.S. foremen; and
- 160 British middle and top managers.

Mintzberg (1990) pointed out that he did not directly interview or observe all of these people. In some cases he reviewed diary notes and studies by other researchers.

While this researcher's ethnographic study was restricted to successful CEOs, Mintzberg had only five chief executives in his study, and his observation was limited to a week with each. He wrote:

> My own study involved five American CEOs of middle- to large-sized organisations – a consulting firm, a technology company, a hospital, a consumer goods company, and a school system. Using a method called 'structural observation,' during one intensive week of observation for each executive, I recorded various aspects of every piece of mail and every verbal contact. In all I analysed 890 pieces of incoming and outgoing mail and 368 verbal contacts.(Mintzberg, 1990: p167)

In addressing this weakness, of having a few CEOs in prior research, Waldman et al., (2001) chose senior managers as respondents. Their sample was comprised as follows:

- a sample of 210 executives generated from 130 Fortune 500 firms surveyed in the middle of 1990 where:

- o 66 were chief financial officers (CFOs);

- o 79 were comptrollers or treasurers; and

- o 65 were senior vice presidents (marketing, human resources, and legal services).

- Early in the summer of 1990 surveys were sent to

  - o 433 CFOs; and

  - o 350 other high ranking financial managers who represented the same firms as the CFOs.

- An additional survey followed approximately three months later and went to

  - o 260 non financial managers from 115 firms.

This researcher's total sample was five CEOs. This researcher's methodology is qualitative: the in-depth access to the strategic leaders and the richness of the data generated precludes the need for a large sample.

3.13.2 Deciding on the tenure of CEOs in the sample

Yukl (2002:p351) effectively argued for analysing CEO performance only after a tenure period of at least three years when he stated: "Strategic leadership by the CEO is also affected by time in office. Hambrick and Fukutomi (1991) presented a model to explain the pattern of changing behaviour observed in many CEOs during their tenure in office. The changing patterns of behaviour have important implications for the effectiveness of a CEO, and the model helps to explain why major reorientations of organisations are seldom initiated by a CEO who has been in office for many years".

The CEO's behaviour is affected variously by the implicit mandate given by the board of directors or owners in the initial stages; the CEO's functional expertise and his or her previous experience in executive roles; and after the initial stage the period of evaluating the effects of the initial phase, and of experimentation with various approaches.

Yukl (2002:p352) explained: "eventually (usually in the second or third year), the executive has enough knowledge and influence to select an enduring theme or strategy and begin to implement it. Subsequent behaviour consists mostly of incremental steps to bolster the new theme or strategy. If the mandate was to maintain continuity or the executive is very conservative and risk averse, then the new theme may be much like that of the former CEO".

A five-year time period, where average performance smoothed out random fluctuations has been argued to be a reasonable period to assess leadership performance (Youndt, Snell, Dean, and Lepak, 1996; Waldman, House, Ramirez and Puranam, 2001; Virany, Tushman and Romanelli (1992) also argued that organisational size and CEO tenure were variables that had to be controlled in any research seeking to explore linkages between CEO characteristics and firm performance.

In this research, only strategic leaders who had been at the helm of their organisations for at least five years were included in the sample.

3.13.3 The measuring of effective organisational performance

In reviewing literature on succession studies, it has been noted that in doing leadership research choosing the criterion of organisational performance has always been problematic (Yukl, 2002).

Other challenges, that have led to the questioning of the validity of results, in succession research included the inability by researchers to account for the effects of firm size, inflationary effects on financial results, as well as inadequate time allowed for new CEOs to impact performance outcomes (Lieberson and O'Connor, 1972; Day and Lord, 1988; Waldman, House, Ramirez, Puranam, 2001).

In the South African automotive retail industry financial performance benchmarks are generally accepted as a standard measure of business success. In this study 18 financial metrics, which measure all aspects of a dealership were used as the success measure. (A dealership is the standard term for an organisation in the retail automotive industry) The researcher, with the

advice of the supplier of the data deliberately steered away from using one measure e.g. Return On Investment, which could mask inefficiencies in certain areas of the business, rather opting for the comprehensive 18 financial metrics.

3.13.4 How performance results were used to select the sample

A consulting company that researches and measures financial performance in the automotive retail industry provided the performance data. The data in Appendix 6 has been masked, for confidentiality purposes, as agreed with the consultancy.

The value of networks arose from the fact that the chairman of the partnership through which this researcher consulted, is highly respected and an authority figure in the automotive retail industry, who pioneered a financial performance management process that is not only the industry's authoritative source of performance, but also the source that was used to determine the criteria for selecting the best performing businesses.

Over the course of over 15 years, from a zero base, close to 700 different businesses now submit their detailed financial and other performance measures into a sophisticated online system that then generates performance benchmarks for the industry. The benchmark for each performance measure (e.g. gross profit, sales per sales person, profitability per staff member and so on) is set at the 70th percentile; in other words, to be above benchmark in each metric the average performance for the given period had to be above the 70th percentile level. Using the actual performance of a business versus benchmark performance intervention strategies would be developed by the management consultants, of which this researcher was one, and by a process of engagement with the business owners these would be implemented in the business and subsequent performances measured over the succeeding periods.

Many successful businesses across the industry in question categorically state that had it not been for this benchmark process, their businesses would have collapsed years ago; their success has been directly attributed to the knowledge gained about effectively managing businesses to and beyond industry benchmarks.

It is through the widespread acceptance of this financial performance process and numerous derivative models consultants use, that the chairman of the partnership builds his reputation and acceptance as an industry guru. So when he willingly wrote personalised support letters requesting the sample leaders to assist the researcher with this study, the acceptance was almost automatic. Financial performance data for the automotive retail industry is not public information even for those businesses which are part of quoted companies: very scant information is available publicly. The researcher was, however, afforded unlimited access to detailed financial performance data.

To choose the sample, firstly the chairman and the researcher identified 18 metrics (see Appendix 6) that would be used to measure overall performance. The 18 different metrics ensured that the businesses selected as being above benchmark, would show consistent high performance across the whole business. Businesses whose performance was above benchmark on all of the 18 metrics over a consistent five year period were then selected. Once the list of the businesses was available and the leaders were identified, leaders who had not been in the strategic leadership position for at least the preceding five year period were eliminated.

Thereafter, by a subjective process of elimination, the researcher removed from the list dealers who would be difficult to access due to location and distance from his centre of operation. Finally, seven dealers who we expected to give of their time over the time of the study, and who we believed would stay the course of the study, and who would understand the value to the industry of the ultimate result, were chosen. These leaders were then approached, using personal invitation letters drafted by the chairman of the consulting company that collates the performance database from over 700 different businesses on a monthly basis.

Why were seven chosen? After careful assessment of the potential time requirements, the difficulty of access to strategic leaders and reference to Mintzberg's (1990) sample of five, the researcher's professor and the researcher agreed on a sample of five. However, the chairman of the consulting company recommended an initial sample of seven. Based on his experience,

anything could happen during the course of the study and a cover of two was sufficient to ensure we ended up with at least five in the final count.

As it transpired he was correct: within the first six months of the study two of the seven had dropped out and the last five, thankfully, cooperated until the end. It is worthwhile to note that the two who dropped out did not personally tell the researcher that they were no longer interested in participating; they just became completely inaccessible.

These five participating leaders managed business structured as set out below:

1. One was a franchise director in one of the country's largest automotive retail groups, which is part of a listed group of companies, and personally in charge of over fifteen dealerships.

2. Another was a franchise director in a large automotive retail group in charge of over ten dealerships. Franchise directors are responsible for dealerships falling under a particular manufacturer franchise e.g. Ford, Nissan, and Mercedes Benz. Holding such a position, in the eyes of the industry, is testimony to the depth of business and leadership skill and acumen honed over years of experience as a leader of single or multiple business units.

3. There was also an owner of an independent (not part of a listed group) group made up of over six dealerships.

4. Another was an owner of one of the largest independent dealerships in the country (within a given franchise).

5. Finally, there was an owner of one of the largest dealerships in the country (for his franchise) part of an expanding group that, at the outset of the study, had two dealerships but within two years was developing a third dealership.

3.13.5 The nature of the relationship between the researcher and the strategic leaders

In the beginning, the researcher was consciously aware of the need to have a sound professional relationship with each of the leaders to ensure their ongoing commitment to the end. The researcher was fortunate to be endorsed by a highly credible and respected industry expert supporting me. He was also fortunate in that one of the final five was a leader he had interacted with when he was a consultant.

The experience with the two leaders who had dropped out, inexplicably, from the first group of seven, had given the researcher early warning signals that these were very busy senior people who were quite able, and justifiably so, to decide to cut their commitment to the study to allow focus on their businesses. As the study progressed and the researcher became accustomed to the fact that meetings could change or be cancelled at the last moment, to allow these leaders to attend to other business issues, he realised only a professional relationship and a flexible approach to the study would ensure their ongoing commitment.

3.13.6 The Industry of focus

The researcher decided upfront that he would concentrate the research on the automotive retail industry for several reasons. He knew the industry intimately from personal experience as a management consultant focusing on dealership performance. He had also worked within the industry as a leadership development consultant, having developed a programme that he successfully delivered to Dealer Principals (strategic leaders).

The chairman of the consulting company he worked for was a well-respected industry expert and his company was considered the premium provider of consulting services in the industry as well as providing, under strict confidentiality guidelines, the financial performance data used to select the sample. This information would have been extremely difficult to obtain in any other industry. The researcher's own personal experiences as Dealer principal and a group financial manager, albeit from Zimbabwe, meant that he had significant managerial experience and an in-depth appreciation of how dealerships worked. Ethnography, it seems, is best adopted as a research methodology where the research subject or topic is in an area where the researcher has a reasonable level of prior knowledge and a good degree of access (Tedlock, 2000).

3.13.7 The structure of the motor industry

The motor industry has another critical dimension, which are the Original Equipment Manufacturers (the car manufacturers). This research will not focus on CEOs in this sector

because most are international placements usually working off three-year fixed contracts. This would make assessment of their effectiveness limited.

Typically, they spend the first year orientating themselves to the South African market, the second year developing and implementing strategies, and the third year winding down and preparing for another overseas posting. Another factor is the expected difficulty in accessing financial performance statistics. The Retail Sector has greater stability at the executive level, and easier access to performance data.

The retail sector is itself split into two types of organisations: those owned and managed by large corporate groups and those that are independently owned. The independently owned can be further segmented into mega, medium and small, based on their turnovers. The sample will be drawn from the large corporate groups as well as the mega independent operators.

3.13.8 Variables controlled in the research

The structure of the above research and the research findings identify four variables that would be controlled in the research. These are discussed below.

3.13.8.1 Industry effects

Meindl, Ehrlich, Dukerich (1985) explained the leadership research complexities that arise from numerous causal factors and highly intricate networks in a constant state of flux that make up systems that a researcher could be studying. It therefore, becomes necessary, as far as possible, to control for such complex variables like the industry variable.

The reason for restricting the sample to the car retail sector is that it enables the researcher to control industry variables. Selecting CEOs from different industries would make the interpretation of the data extremely complex because industry factors would need to be adjusted for. Selecting CEOs from one industry automatically controls this key variable. However, there is a limitation placed on generalisability of the findings.

As Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003:p376) point out in reference to their study: "the empirical material of this study is, of course, limited to a particular organisational context, we must always consider context in studying social phenomena and in particular when addressing leadership)." This study is therefore limited to the context defined above which includes the South African economy and its automotive retail industry.

Concentrating on industry eliminates the need to account for differences that arise when studying leaders from different industries (Bryman, 2004b). Many factors could contribute to success in one industry that may not be present in the other, such that if these were not accounted for, apples would be compared to oranges. The result of the research is that all findings will be specific to effective CEOs within that industry.

3.13.8.2 National cultural effects
The researcher decided upfront to concentrate the study on the chosen industry in South Africa. At an earlier conceptual stage he wanted to expand the study internationally, incorporating countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom. However, the potential difficulty in having to account for, or eliminate national difficulties, convinced him to restrict the study to South Africa.

A case in point is the differences in the financial accounting structures between South African and Australian dealerships. In Australia, due to their different taxation legislations most of the businesses there are owned by family trusts and property holdings and the subsequent appreciation is a key indicator of business value. At financial year ends reserves are transferred into family trusts and not kept in the business as traditionally happens in South Africa.

Derived property investments, mainly where the dealership is positioned, usually in prime positions, is factor one would need to account for in determining a business' success. Accounting for these different reporting structures to ensure a fair comparison of success between the two countries would have proven a statistical challenge that he decided not to attempt. Furthermore, it would have been virtually impossible to bridge the geographical and financial hurdles in trying to observe and spend time with leaders on two continents.

3.13.8.3 Organisation size

It was also decided by the professor, the chairman of the consulting company and the researcher, to focus on leaders whose businesses had average monthly sales or the potential to achieve average monthly sales of at least 100 vehicle units and were based in the major urban metropolis of Gauteng. This would ensure recognisable scale (unit sales, staff, and market share) organisations would be part of the sample. They also represented easy of physical access for the researcher. This eliminated the need to account for rural and small town effects.

3.13.8.4 CEO tenure

The need to attribute success, as was measured financially, to the CEO being studied was critical. The decision was taken to eliminate those whose incumbent leader had been in the organisation for less than five years in that business entity, unless the business was a new business built or taken over within that five-year period, with the leader being the strategic driver thereof.

3.14 Data collection procedures

Denzin and Lincoln (1994:p14) argue for a multi-method approach in qualitative research when they pointed out that "a strategy of inquiry comprises a bundle of skills, assumptions, and practices that researchers employ as they move from their paradigm to the empirical world. Strategies of inquiry put paradigms of interpretation into motion. These strategies include the case study, phenomenological and ethno-methodological techniques." The multi-method approach of collecting data or empirical materials was therefore adopted in this research.

The initial approach to determine the multiple methods before the field work commenced was as follows:

  i.   An initial exploratory discussion with each leader
  ii.   Identification of critical incidents to observe
  iii.   Use of diaries to validate identified critical incidents
  iv.   Maintaining extensive field notes

3.14.1 An initial exploratory one-on-one discussion with each leader

After the sample selection and acceptance by the five leaders to participate in the study, the researcher set up appointments with each one of them to provide them as much detail about the study as possible. The objective was for them to become aware of the implications of their commitment. The researcher also set out to obtain a preliminary understanding of who they were and how they had arrived at their current business position.

This first appointment was a general free-flowing discussion structured around the following themes: purpose of the study; what ethnography meant and the potential nature of dynamics between the researcher, the observed, other participants like subordinates; the expected time in the field and how this was dependent on the nature and frequency of critical events that they would help me identify. There was also a general discussion around the following themes: what has been your journey to this leadership position, what do you understand as the key things you do as a leader, what critical events should be observed that would best help me understand what you do?'

3.14.2 Identification of critical incidents to observe

Flanaghan (1954) described critical incidents, and first successfully used them in aviator assessment during the second world war, as those things that are significant to an activity or phenomenon; they can be either positive or negative. The resultant Critical Incident Technique is a multi-method procedure used for collecting observations of human behaviour that have critical significance and meet methodically defined criteria.

This research is an ethnographic study of effective CEOs at work, specifically during identified critical incidents. The researcher observed, interviewed and interacted with each selected leader during the identified critical incidents.

All the five leaders agreed that they had a strong enough understanding of the purpose of this study and at the end of each of the personal leadership philosophy discussions agreement was

reached on critical incidents that would be observed in order to gain a representative observation of what they did and how they did it. While the researcher discussed the need for diary analysis he deliberately deferred such an analysis to a latter stage, to avoid his perspective being framed in advance by what the diaries revealed, in the highly possibly event that their documented time usage did not reflect what the strategic leaders perceived as critical incidents.

The following critical incidents were identified, and were uniform across the five participants: various types of management meetings, where the leader chaired the meeting or the meeting was chaired on a rotational basis by one of the subordinates.

These meetings included vehicle sales meetings, franchise meetings, after sales meetings, finance committee meetings, marketing meetings, staff performance meetings, financial performance review meetings, board meetings, with non-executive shareholders or with non-executive directors, who were not necessarily board members. In addition, other critical incidents included meetings the five leaders had with other non-competing business leaders to share business performance best practices.

3.14.3   Use of diaries to validate identified critical incidents

One of the useful processes that also satisfied the validation challenges of this research, was the strategic leaders' agreement to allow the researcher to view their diaries. The diaries, which were either manual or electronic, were reviewed over a consistent three month period within 12 months of the time of the field-work (appendix 7). In some cases, the strategic leaders gave the researcher the diaries. In two instances, he had to do the analysis on site with the assistance of the owners. In all cases the diaries validated the critical incidents that had been identified. They also revealed additional critical incidents that were subsequently included in the observations. The two additional critical incidents were the time spent with other strategic leaders and then secondly, the time spent in engaging with staff and customers while walking around the business.

3.14.4   Maintaining extensive field notes

During the observation the researcher took extensive field notes in his field note book. These notes took the form of plain narrative, pictorial mind-maps around themes sensed as significant

and relevant. For example, he would develop a mind-map around metaphors used or physical posture during a meeting. Sometimes he employed different colour highlighter pens to emphasise tonality for example green highlight meant a soothing tone, whereas red, would me a forceful tone. This kind of approach helped him identify themes as he went along and latter when he started the data analysis.

He also kept extensive notes on his own feelings about the research and what he was observing. This note taking of his own feelings assisted him in two distinct ways: firstly, throughout the research he was able to continual use this process to distance himself from a focus on his personal experiences and rather to focus on what he was observing; secondly, in the subsequent writing and analysis he was able to reflect on, and effectively deal with, the impact of his own subjective experience on the observation.

CHAPTER FOUR: MY TIME IN THE FIELD

4.1 Time in the field

In Section 3.10 the richness of a first person account was discussed. Chapters Four and Five of this study are primarily written in a first person account as this writing style enabled the researcher to better convey the substance and quality of the fieldwork, the findings as well as the researcher's own personal journey over the course of the five years of the research.

The field study took 755 hours in total: 451 observation hours, 120 hours to transcribe the videotapes and 184 hours of travel time logged. The average time per leader worked out to approximately 12 days per leader, with an actual spread from 13 days to 27 days per leader; significant compared to Mintzberg's (1990) study of five CEOs where he only had one week (five days) per each leader. The observation time of 451 hours arose out of 138 discrete observations. This time of 755 hours excluded the hours spent on transcribing field notes, and writing up the research, and reading the literature.

The challenges of undertaking part-time doctoral studies became apparent as I embarked on the field study: time challenges, the availability of the research subjects, high levels of ongoing research and reading required, the time constraints arising from the need to juggle limited leave days and field requirements and the ever present need to manage personal and social dynamics.

A particularly frustrating situation, was when I arrived at a dealership for a management meeting, only to have the secretary realise she had not communicated to me the change of venue to another dealership, almost 30 kilometres away. I made my way there to arrive two hours after the meeting had started and everyone was leaving to go and attend a late colleague's funeral.

I managed to observe how the leader in question handled the staff motivation and uncertainty that always surrounds the sudden death of a close colleague and how he remained emphatic about the need to celebrate the late individual's life. The day could have turned out to be an

unproductive one, but an opportunity presented itself to observe the leader in an unusual situation.

On another occasion, I confirmed an appointment to observe a management meeting at a dealership 50 kilometres away. When the CEO eventually arrived, he was surprised to see me there. The scheduled meeting had been cancelled due to building renovations, but the communication had not reached me, because I was not part of the business Executive Committee and the secretary had overlooked this.

Instead of excusing himself, the leader began talking about his business strategy and for the next three hours he totally dedicated himself to me and we explored at length the developments in his business. He only took a few calls during that time. Such is the calibre of leaders that I observed.

The time challenges compounded when I changed jobs from being an independent consultant, to being a full-time employee towards the end of the study. Whereas, as a consultant, one could plan study and meetings around free non-consulting days, as an employee, I now had to juggle my diary.

4.2 How the research developed over time

Some of the events or milestones are self-explanatory and were not dramatic in any sense so I do not intend elaborating on them. Some, however, were fairly dramatic and I take the time to explain what happened in this text as well as in the accompanying and referenced appendices.

4.2.1 The preparatory work

I recall being required to complete a copious amount of reading in fulfilment of the entry requirements for the Doctor of Business Leadership degree. I remember being told by the head of the School of Business Leadership, in 2002, that the reason for this was to demonstrate to the school that the applicant had the capacity to complete a doctoral degree, and also to show the applicant the potential extent of the personal time input into the programme. It took me close to a year to complete the reading list, and almost four years since then have been marked by

continual reading. I have read well over one hundred books and articles, some of these referred to by my professor and some as the need to understand different themes on leadership led me to invest in an extensive library on leadership.

Every feedback session with my professor always, without fail, produced more literature to read. All reading was useful: I never seemed to exhaust my professor's internal references to relevant resources.

4.2.2 The data collection and analysis period

4.2.2.1 Acquiring observation skills - NLP Training

Over the course of the study I have also developed unique skills in the human performance models of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) and Neuro Semantics (NS).

Throughout the study I constantly reminded myself to stand aside from my internal processes (what NLP refers to as downtime) and to always be in uptime, fully conscious of what I was observing. It was no easy task in the beginning, because my own academic training and my management and leadership experiences made it easy to connect with what each CEO and his team were experiencing. My background as a Chartered Accountant, management consultant, CEO in same automotive retail industry, and a Masters in Business Leadership graduate, all too often left me biting my tongue to hold back interjections and suggestions. However, as time progressed, I put into practice my NLP/ NS training on how to model expertise. Gradually, the participants became experimental subjects whom I was able to merely observe from a distant in a very detached manner, the true spirit of an expert NLP performance modeller.

The most life-changing experience of the entire study was the study of the human performance modelling field and models of NLP. Earlier in the study, before the fieldwork commenced in earnest, my professor asked me a very intriguing question: "Now that we accept that the research methodology is qualitative and of the ethnographic genre, and you will be observing leaders in practice, how are you going to observe?"

This was probably one of the most difficult questions to answer. After much discussion I came to realise that going into the field without articulating how I would do the observation would literally render the whole study a futile exercise in understanding leaders. Fortunately, I had been exposed to NLP and had become aware of its potential as a tool to use in observing the subjective experience of the strategic leader.

By the time I started the research I had completed a fair amount of self-study on NLP, but had never studied it under a qualified coach. On the recommendation of my professor I found a coach in South Africa under whom I studied and latter qualified and received certification as an NLP Practitioner; NLP certification has two levels, basic and master. My prior knowledge had been based on self-study of a book, recommended as a must-read by the NLP fraternity, The User's Manual for The Brain, Volume 1, written by Bodenhamer and Hall (1990). It was under Bob Bodenhamer, one of the authors, that I latter studied, in the USA, for and obtained the certification as an NLP Master Practitioner.

It was Bob Bodenhamer who latter agreed to review the results of my study and also to present his opinion, in writing, on my findings, either as validation or critique of the results I would have proposed.

4.2.2.2 Development of an NLP observation template

From the NLP Practitioner training I quickly developed the first observation template; the tool for the how I was going to observe. This template arose from what NLP refers to as the VAK patterns; V – Visual; A – Auditory; K – Kinaesthetic (feelings and internal processing). The VAK patterns simply state that by observing how people use their body and language it is possible to understand how their access or process information in one of three distinct ways; visually (in pictures), auditory (sounds), kinaesthetically (primarily feelings). There is a fourth pattern, which is auditory-digital, where people prefer to use an abstract way of thinking.

Finally, I had a way to observe so I would go into each observation ready to note every single body and eye movement, ready to write down as much as possible. I had agreed in advance not

to tape record the proceedings - every word spoken, how it was spoken and the obvious impact on the group, every sense I observed and felt of the group dynamics. All this was to obtain as much data as possible to reflect on and analyse using the VAK template.

4.2.2.3 Working with the five strategic leaders

Early in the research I had obtained a clear understanding of the different types of personalities that I was observing: from a very quiet introverted leader, who described himself during the video-taped session as quietly enthusiastic, to an ebullient, gentle, firm speaking leader, to one who always appeared calm, highly focussed, with measured speaking, to one who was an outspoken enthusiast of mind power and mind over matter principles and to a highly vocal, 'will speak my mind' type.

Each of these leaders was a unique individual, who expressed who he was without regard to my presence. From the beginning it was clear that each leader was authentic, living and expressing his core values. I discovered that the five leaders consistently, unconsciously it seems, knew their core values and manifested these without hesitancy, be it publicly or privately.

One of the key lessons of NLP is learning how to create rapport, how to get along, with different types of people. I put this learned ability to good use throughout the research. As time passed, due to improved rapport, it became easier and easier to make direct calls to each of the leaders with any request, for example the request for videotaped interviews, which happened after I returned from the advanced NLP training in the USA. I recall that when I came back and made personal calls to all the leaders requesting additional time to carry out video-taped interviews all agreed with no difficulty to this request, even though it still took several months to work through all the interviews, due to their diary constraints.

4.2.2.4 Initial meetings with the five strategic leaders

The term personal leadership philosophy is one that I began to utilise early on in the research, just after I had started the fieldwork. One of the things I had asked of every leader was an opportunity for me to describe to them in detail what the study was about and what it entailed in

terms of time commitment on their part. As it turned out with each of these initial exploratory meetings, after we had spent about an hour talking about the objectives of the study of the lived experience of the strategic leader, all of them always shared their experiences as business leaders and the journeys they had walked to reach where they were. It was, as I transcribed the notes and reflected on them, that I realized that these discussions were in essence expositions of each leader's view or perspective on leadership. It was from this realisation that I developed and began to utilise the term personal leadership philosophy. (See Chapter 5 for a full exposition of the personal leadership philosophy).

4.2.2.5 The observations

The observations are the time I spent observing the strategic leaders during the identified critical incidents. Strategic leaders are busy people: every single moment of their working lives, they are actively pursuing something or other of significance to their businesses. It was therefore, critical that from the start, I was clear about which of these events were the most critical in terms of impact and importance as a leader. At the outset, as I prepared my research question, and in numerous discussions with my professor, I made a list of what I considered critical incidents: management meetings; board meetings; staff meetings; mentoring/ coaching sessions; and visiting subsidiaries and direct reports.

During the first engagements with the leaders, when I explained the objectives of the study I shared the concept of critical incidents and asked them their views. Without exception these leaders validated what I had selected as critical incidents and so we structured my observations around these.

We also agreed in advance that should any unexpected event occur that they regarded as a critical incident they would contact me and if time permitted I would be present for the observation. One of the leaders, who latter withdrew, had advised me of a series of crucial negotiations with external parties for a business takeover, which he was willing for me to attend. Unfortunately, none of the other strategic leaders experienced critical incident which arose outside those we had identified in advance.

4.2.2.6 Analysis of documents (diaries)

Towards the end of the field study, I asked each of the strategic leaders if I could review the way they allocated their time at work, excluding their personal lives, as the research methodology was restricted to their work lives. It was, however, interesting to note that, save for one leader, in all my discussions and observations, there was hardly any meaningful reference to their personal lives, probably more a result of the way I had outlined the purpose of the research at the outset, than any efforts on their part to keep work and private life separate.

I requested the five strategic leaders' business diaries for any recent three month consecutive period.   While I had no problem in obtaining positive responses to my requests the views that were expressed are interesting to note:

> One indicated that he never let anyone see his diary because of the sensitiveness of some of the business and personal data, and also, that his diary was completed using abbreviations that only he would understand and I would find hard to interpret. In the end we sat down for almost two hours and developed a high level utilisation category of his time that he was comfortable with.

> Another willingly showed me diaries going back more than seven years and asked me to make my selection at will, and to take whatever I wanted with me, and to only bring them back when I was thoroughly satisfied.

> Yet another asked me for some time to gather the old diaries and later on I received a call from his assistant to come and collect them.

> Another summarised the time utilisation into neat categories for me and another made copies of his electronic diary for me and let me have them without any further questioning.

4.2.2.7 Meta-Master NLP training

NLP training currently has two levels of training; NLP Practitioner and NLP Master Practitioner. When I made the decision to use NLP as my observation methodology I decided to embark on and complete both levels of the training. I did the Practitioner level course in South Africa. The Master Practitioner course I was able to complete in the USA under the expert tutelage of Dr. Bob Bodenhamer, one of the authors of the acclaimed NLP training books The User's Manual For The Brain (Vol. 1) and The User's Manual For The Brain (Vol. 2), the books I had used for self-study before I started the research.

At the outset of his training course, Bodenhamer asked all the participants who had gathered from across the globe their reasons for travelling from around the world to attend his training. When it came to my turn I explained the purposes of my research on the lived experience of strategic leaders and the fact that NLP was the underlying methodology for the observations. Bodenhamer was particularly interested in this because as he also agreed that one of the areas, even in the field of leadership development, that still needed a great deal of focus was on the strategic leader (CEO) as well as the process of strategic leadership in corporate organisations, and that NLP was very well suited, by its focus on the how and what of human behaviour, to such a study.

I explained the need for the expert validation of my results by an expert in the field of NLP. He agreed to read my research paper and to comment on the findings, and to provide validation or critique as necessary. In addition to agreeing to this Bodenhamer also consented to the full use of any of materials and NLP tools for the purposes of my study. As this training progressed, and I was exposed to more in-depth NLP tools and processes, I began to appreciate that in addition to been a tool for complete observation certain NLP processes also provided a way to understand how leaders think. In discussion with Bodenhamer I decided that the best way to understand how leaders thought was to use the 51 Meta-Program Questionnaire. Bodenhamer advised me to request the strategic leaders to videotape them, so that I could analyse their responses at leisure and as often and as in-depth as I needed. Videotaping would also save me from the distraction of speed writing the strategic leader's responses. He further advised me to ask the leaders to set

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aside at the most one and half hours to go through the 51 questions one question after the other seeking spontaneous responses along the way, as in the spontaneity would be genuineness of responding. (See Appendix 2 for Meta Programs).

One significant benefit of using this dual tool, the 51 Meta-Program questionnaire and the videotaped sessions, was that I could use the results after analysis and search for common emergent patterns and themes as part of the triangulation process of validating the results of the complete observations.

4.2.2.8 Meta-Program interviews with the five strategic leaders

On my return from the USA training, I discussed the whole training as well as the potential use of Meta-Programs for understanding how the leaders, within the given context, thought about what they did with my professor. We had three major concerns. The first was the fact that the meta-program process would be a departure from the unobtrusive observation approach we had adopted. We were also not sure if the leaders would accept to be videotaped. Finally, we were not sure whether the leaders would be as natural during the interviews as they were during the observations. The first concern was addressed by the fact that the Meta-Program questionnaire could and would be used as part of the validation of the results from the observation.

The second concern became invalid as all the five leaders agreed to the request to be interviewed and videotaped. In asking the business leaders if I could videotape them, I explained that this would ensure that I would capture in my electronic field-notes the language, the behavioural responses, much more effectively than I would have if I could only write down all their responses, further enabling me to go back over and over again to listen and cross-check the responses. Furthermore, I explained that with their full permission, I would be making the video tapes available to Bodenhamer, who had agreed to comment on my results and analysis from an NLP perspective. All the strategic leaders agreed to this process of validation.

The third concern also became invalid as, throughout all the interviews, I never had any sense of a difference in attitude and disposition from all the other observations including the initial

'personal leadership philosophy' sessions. Appendix 2 provides a full description of the results of the video-taped interviews.

4.2.2.9 Review of raw data from observation notes

By the time the year 2005 came to a close I had reached what I felt was a thick description in the raw data. I had filled up several note books with observation material. I had numerous scraps of paper stapled to the notepads where I had written down thoughts and reflections as I carried on with my day job, and I had several flipcharts filled with notes and diagrams, as I drew conceptual diagrams, and made notes about the flow of the material.

As the year closed, I had a fairly good sense that I had reached thick description. I also had close to ten hours of the meta-program video recordings ready for transcribing into written form and analysis. I developed and implemented a writing and analysis plan from December through to March.

As an overview the key steps in the analysis are set out below:

- analysis of the personal leadership philosophy field-notes and search for the emergence of common patterns;
- analysis of the observations and search for the emergence of common patterns;
- analysis of the videotaped sessions and search for the emergence of common patterns;
- analysis of the post-diary analysis observation field-notes;
- cross-checking of the patterns emerging between initial observations, videotaped interview sessions, post-diary analysis observation and search for similarities;
- cross-checking of patterns emerged from the analysis of personal leadership philosophy to those from the other observations (a validity check); and
- where saturation and thick description were not achieved, or a sense thereof, more observations were undertaken.

4.2.2.10 The use of pseudo names in the writing

The primary key rule of engagement with each leader was the need for confidentiality of their personal names and those of their organisations. The names of the organisations and their specific results were masked in the financial performance analysis used to select the sample. The names of the participating strategic leaders were removed from all written material. Some of the strategic leader names were mentioned in the videotaped sessions: tapes were, however, only made available to Bodenhamer, with the participants' permission. The researcher retained the original sets.

For the purposes of writing the research results, I decided to use pseudo names, to capture the essence of each strategic leader's character as I experienced it. The following are the pseudo names used in the writing:

Sharkira Hawk

This strategic leader reminded me of both a shark and a hawk in that he appeared very cold, ruthlessly calculating, and created the sense of having the patience to hold back and circle above prey, like a hawk until the opportune time to pounce appeared. The man was a vocal forceful character, who reminded me of the sharpness and focus of a shark while having the penetrating gaze and overarching view and speed of a hawk.

Kehoe Banks

This strategic leader had such a strong focus on and belief in the ability to use one's mind and mind powers to achieve any result or goal. This strategic leader exhibited a deep understanding of how the brain/ mind works. I was immediately reminded of two experts on the use and training of mind power, and it is the combination of their two surnames that I used to represent this strategic leader.

Dove Patience

This leader seemed introverted to me while at the same time I had the sense of him being a shrewd businessman, but strongly tempered by gentleness and patience reminding me of a dove.

This is the strategic leader who once described himself as "quietly enthusiastic". This leader was or came across as deeply introverted, quite unassuming, exhibiting deep wells of patience in dealing with staff and customers. He appeared and acted gentle as a dove, with the apparent wisdom and patience to go with it.

Robbins M. Jackson

This strategic leader described himself as a "pop psychologist" and spending time with him on a one-on-one basis and also observing his interactions with staff and customers left me feeling personally inspired and motivated and I obtained the strong sense that he similarly inspired and motivated everyone he came into contact with. He reminded me of a charismatic preacher-type motivational speaker from whom he now derives his first name and at the same time he reminded me of a famous charismatic and electrifying world-acclaimed pop singer from who derives his middle initial and surname.

Dolphin Structura

Couple the intelligence of a dolphin, its noted compassion and positive disposition towards humans and a highly structured approach to life, and one has the fifth leader, appropriately metaphorically named Dolphin Structura. His pseudo names therefore capture the highly dominant qualities that I sensed and observed in him, intelligence, structure and process orientation.

4.2.2.11 Transcribing videotaped interviews and reviewing the related raw data

The transcribing of the videotapes is a task I underestimated completely. Initially, I thought that the most it would take me would be 20 hours, double the length of the recording, to complete the transcribing but I was hardly prepared for the difficulty and slowness of the whole process. In the end, I took almost 120 hours to complete the almost 10 hours of video-recording.

I decided against using the services of professionals because I felt that just the process of listening as I transcribed, would keep the leaders' voices alive and that I would be able to gain more than just by reading text that someone had transcribed already. The process of transcribing

also acted as validation of the fact that there was consistency between the attitude and disposition during the recording and that during the observations: there was no apparent change in behaviour between the two.

4.2.2.12 Review of available thick description and sort for emergent common patterns

As I reviewed and analysed the data as I gathered it I continually searched for emerging common themes and patterns. At a stage in this process, I reached a point of realising that nothing new would emerge from further observation; I had reached thick description that point in ethnographic research where, as a researcher, you know that nothing knew, no more insights, would be gained by further fieldwork.

4.2.2.13 Request for diaries and diary analysis

In April I had another feedback session with my Professor where we again discussed progress. She pointed out that as we had discussed earlier on in the study, there was a need to ask the CEOs for their business diaries and to review these to see how they spent the time they scheduled. A secondary objective was to ensure that I had observed, via the critical incidents strategy, all the critical incidents in their business lives. The review of diaries would also reveal any critical incidents not identified before. Using different diary review approaches, as dictated by each strategic leader, I completed the analysis.

4.2.2.14 Post diary analysis and further observations

The diary analysis revealed an interesting high level of consistency of time utilisation among all the leaders (appendix 7 and appendix 8). The strategic leaders generally spent a relatively similar amount of time on the following critical incidents: management meetings, visiting with direct reports, walking around the organisation, with external suppliers, and with other strategic leaders outside their organisations.

In two areas, however (mentoring/ coaching and customer engagements) while all the strategic leaders devoted time to these critical incidents, two spent a far higher proportion of time than the others. Another two invested a higher proportion of time in staff meetings, again, a reflection of

their personal philosophy more than anything else. The amount of time was a reflection of their personal leadership philosophy in the areas of staff development and customer interaction.

Two new critical incidents were highlighted by the review of the diaries. The first is what I called Leadership Engagement, where the leaders devoted time on a regular basis, usually quarterly, to discuss business strategy and business performance with other non-competing leaders in the automotive retail industry. During Leadership Engagement, the strategic leaders spent time out of their organisations interacting with similar leaders from within the industry. At these meetings the strategic leaders openly shared their financial performance, strategic challenges and sought to understand how the others were succeeding in particular areas.

I always found these sessions stimulating. I watched how leaders were open to being critiqued and challenged by their peers, and how, in all instances, they would all rise to challenge, and in some instances place nominal bets that they would, by the time they next met, have resolved the issues at hand.

The second, Face-time Leadership, was where, on a daily basis, time was dedicated to meeting with staff, customers and subordinates at their work stations leveraging face-value and the opportunity this created for instantaneous decision-making and keeping in touch with the pulse of the organisation. During Face-time Leadership, leaders dealt with many business problems on the spot as they walked around their businesses; sometimes the engagements with staff and or customers was not to specifically resolve problems but rather to motivate inspire and encourage.

4.2.2.15 Observing leadership engagements

I need to emphasise the unwavering commitment of the five leaders in the sample. I had advised them in advance that, if necessary, I would request further observation of any events that had not been covered. All requests that were made to observe the leadership engagement were granted. During the course of the previous two years, I had sat through the leadership engagement sessions of two of the leaders.

4.2.2.16 A holiday break and the development of the magic language box

In August 2006, I took a vacation to Disneyland Florida with my five year old son. By this time I was feeling a strong sense of nearing completion of the research. I was, however, extremely frustrated that I had not as yet found a way to encapsulate the patterns and themes emerging out of the raw data (the thick description). There was a great deal that I was seeing as common patterns among the five leaders, but even as I wrote it all down, I was getting the sense that I was not quite conveying my findings.

I recall how as the months unfolded, and as I worked through the fieldwork, the analysis and the writing, I began to have a very strong sense and appreciation of the fact that what the strategic leaders were doing was similar to cocooning their organisations in an invisible web based on their personal leadership philosophy, sayings (language) and actions.

The thought and sense of a web stayed with me for a long time until one day as I synthesised and summarised my finding into eight distinct themes I began to think of a spider-web, the connection arising out of the eight emergent themes, the cocooning effect of what the leaders did, and the eight legs of a spider. I immediately linked the two into a spider (eight legs) web. That is how the metaphor of the spider-web came about. However, it was not until after my holiday, that I spoke to my professor about the spider-web metaphor where upon she suggested I read about spiders to see whether my thinking was correct. My subsequent study of how spiders created webs substantiated the relevance of this metaphor.

Another significant development in my thinking occurred while I was in Disneyland with my son. In section 5.5 I describe fully the magical experience of Disneyland and how it impacted my understanding of what strategic leaders do. I do remember, however, at some stage during the show I watched, saying to myself: "that is what effective leaders do! By the almost magical use of language, in whatever form, they spin a web around their organisations".

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4.2.2.17 Development of the pure leadership spider-web model

While the conceptualisation of the spider-web model began before my Disneyland excursion, the validation of this thinking occurred during that trip, and the subsequent research on spider-web construction. The study of spider-web construction was internet based. The study revealed 16 distinct steps of spider-web construction that not only provide further insight into the metaphor spider-web model but also formed the basis of the propositions of this study.

In Chapter 5 I layout the 16 steps in a spider's construction of its web that bear close similarity to how leaders do what they do so effectively. In reading this it will become clear how fitting the spider-web model is as a descriptor of what the strategic leader does in an organisation.

As the analysis of all the field data continued, I slowly developed a cohesive sense from all the emergent common themes that, while leaders were different and came in all shapes, forms and sizes, the potential existed for the identification of the commonalities that made them successful. These commonalities were eventually synthesised into what I called the pure spider-web model.The word pure was used to demonstrate what I came to understand, that anyone who so desires can become a strategic leader, a leader of an organisation, provided that they mastered and applied the common patterns that I had observed in the strategic leaders and that I captured in the spider-web model.

The next chapter describes in detail the interpretation of the data and the key results and how they culminate into the concept Mickey's Magic Language Box and the pure leadership spider-web model.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1 How the results are arranged

If one were to take a bird's eye view of the unfolding process of the fieldwork (the actual face-to-face time with the leaders) and re-arrange the work into sequential order, the most logical sequence would be as follows :

1st level order: the personal leadership philosophy discussions;

2nd level order: the different discrete critical events observed; and

3rd level order: the videotaped meta-program questionnaire interview sessions (and the post-interview sessions which incidentally occurred immediately after the video sessions).

The 1st level order and 3rd level order I have used, in addition to their own respective review and analysis, as tools for triangulation (Denzin, 1989; Blaxter et. Al, 2001) and a validity check for the findings in the 2nd level order. The 2nd level order is where the direct and complete observation took place. The 1st level order personal leadership philosophy discussions were not planned in advance in the methodology, they were emergent and a much appreciated and insightful bonus arising from the willingness of the participants to share in depth their own business experiences.

The 3rd level order videotaped meta-program questionnaire responses-interviews were, again, not part of the original methodology. Sandberg (2005:p50) states that "while reading through the transcripts, the researcher may experience a discrepancy between his or her initial interpretation and the way socialisation shows itself to consciousness. In such a case, truth is not evident. Based on the first reading, the researcher formulates a new interpretation and reads the transcripts a second time. This iterative process continues until the researcher experiences an agreement between his or her presumed interpretation of socialisation and the way the individuals' lived experience of socialisation shows itself to consciousness. Only then can truth be said to be achieved."

This was a qualitative research study focussed on complete observation of critical events. However, during my advanced NLP Master Practitioner training in the USA, it became very apparent that NLP provided a tool that I could use to satisfy the validity requirements and concerns of ethnography. Validity would be ensured if themes identified under the 2nd level order

(complete observation) also emerged under the 1st level order (personal leadership philosophy) and under the 3rd level order (the videotaped meta-program questionnaire responses-interviews). As Sandberg (2005:p52) states the "assessment of truth claims is an iterative process of correcting by comparing alternative knowledge claims within a certain research perspective as well as between specific research perspectives. It can lead to a deeper understanding of the aspect of human activity under investigation, and limitations in specific knowledge claims can be disclosed and replaced by more inclusive knowledge claims. This means that truth achieved within interpretive approaches will never be one final and unambiguous truth but rather is an ongoing and open process of knowledge claims correcting each other."

Commenting on the use of the 3rd level order results in validating the results from the 1st level order and 2nd level order Bodenhamer (2005) wrote, in his validation report to this study: "George's primary research methodology was observations in selected settings which provided the data and the results referred to above. George's use of Meta-Programs while providing accurate independent insight into how these executive leaders think also, from my analysis and interpretation provide sufficient validation of the other findings from the observations he undertook in the field, of leaders doing what they do."

The results of the research are, for ease of flow, arranged in the same numerical order: 1st level order, 2nd level order and finally, the 3rd level order.

5.2 The 1st level order events: The personal leadership philosophy

The observation time of 451 hours arose out of 138 discrete interactions. These discrete interactions included the one-on-one discussions with each leader (prior to the commencement of the study, and then, on an ongoing basis when the need arose and the relationship improved). It is pertinent to explore just how these in-depth personal discussions came about (appendix 9).

When the five leaders agreed to be part of the study, instead of rushing straight into the observation, I decided to initiate a primary discussion, where I planned to brief them fully about the research, its purpose, the method of study, their involvement and expected time in the field.

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All leaders accepted this invitation to an initial discussion. I recall how taken aback I was by their enthusiasm for the study. Even now, when I review my field-notes, it appears as if there was a silent conspiracy among these leaders to share as much as possible with me about themselves and their business lives, because all displayed an openness that pervaded all of our interactions. Even the less ebullient, the more reserved and introverted among the five shared openly about what I decided to call the personal leadership philosophy.

What made me decide to label these initial discussions the personal leadership philosophy? I did not start off by labelling these primary discussions as such because my whole focus and preparation to that stage had geared me, as the well-prepared ethnographic researcher, to go as quickly as possible into the field and start the observations, rather than to allow time to understand personal views on leadership, after all the methodology was complete observation.

The term personal leadership philosophy emerged out of my thinking as I reviewed, over the course of a few weeks, all the notes I had written from the one-on-one meetings with all the five leaders. It became very clear that what they had shared with me was probably the same thing they would have shared if I had walked in and asked them the three part question: "what do you understand about strategic leadership, about being a strategic leader and how would you describe your personal way of strategic leadership (your philosophy)?" In reality, I did not ask any of the leaders any such question. Instead the personal leadership philosophy discussions emerged as a response to my sharing the essence of the proposed research on the lived experience of the strategic leader.

On reflection, it therefore became very clear that the only appropriate label for the in-depth discussion was to label it, the personal leadership philosophy These preliminary discussions did not, in all instances, last just one meeting: in several instances they were spread over three to five different meetings ranging in length from two hours to four and a half hours.

In most cases, whenever a meeting, usually set as an observation, finished early or where the leader had time to spare, I always was invited to "pop into my office and let's chat over a quick

cup of coffee" or "let me show you some of the exciting developments around the dealership". Inevitably the leader ended up sharing more about his leadership philosophy, in some instances a more in-depth discourse of what had already been shared, while in others new perspectives were shared.

The internet dictionary (Dictionary.com, 2006) describes philosophy as a system of principles for guidance in practical affairs. As I analysed and reviewed the notes from the personal discussions, themes began to emerge which eventually, as I cross-checked and analysed the data, crystallised into consistent patterns, themes or pillars which make up the personal leadership philosophy.

These pillars are choosing to stay the course or longevity in one industry; day by intuitive gut-feel leadership; personal involvement in the operational side of the business; a determined expression of the self; a responsible empowering of direct reports; a passion for people and developing a deep understanding of people; implementing performance driven management and remuneration systems; a thoroughly detailed focus on business processes, measurements and metrics to aid in business management; the need for high energy levels; strong beliefs in relentless, formal and informal, communication across the board and a persistently relentless and prioritised focus on customers, both internal and external. Outlined below is greater detail about the meaning of each pillar.

5.2.1 Pillar 1: choosing to stay the course or longevity in the industry
The time spent in one industry seemed to be a key factor in current success. Years of experience developed an instinct for doing what was right for the moment. The number of years in the industry ranged from 20 to 34 years. The entrance into the industry was in all the cases, but one, not a conscious choice, but rather a result of prevailing circumstances. Only one CEO consciously investigated the highest performing and paying industries at the time and decided to seek a job in the automotive sector. Irrespective of the reason for the entrance a conscious decision was made to stay the course and experience was gathered along the way. The first thing that stood out for me was the fact that leaders stayed the course and the second was that it really

doesn't matter how one gets into an industry, what matters is the conscious choice to stay the course.

5.2.2 Pillar 2: day-by-day intuitive, gut-feel leadership

Closely linked, and probably a result of longevity in the industry, all the CEOs constantly referred to what they did as mostly by gut-feel in describing particularly their innate ability to respond dynamically to the changing environment. One referred to his predominant function as crystal ball gazing and another as having a close reliance on the sponge of knowledge accumulated over years and years of experience.

In all cases they stated that the job is dynamic and for more than half the time it is not structured on a day-by-day basis. One said that "any CEO able to say exactly what he did on a day-by-day basis was a liar as it is not possible to structure the role so easily because of its very dynamic nature."

In the uncertainty that surrounds the job, all the CEOs constantly and almost obsessively pursued challenges that always brought out the best in them. Challenges included: a Management Buy Out (MBO) of a financial scale well beyond the wealth of the management team involved, or deciding to be the best dealership in the car manufacturer franchise. (One particular dealership moved from being ranked in the lower 40's into the top 10 performing franchises within a period of one year).

5.2.3 Pillar 3: personal involvement in the operational side of the business

Irrespective of the scale of operations managed, from the head of an independent dealership to the head of a franchise within a large corporate group, directly responsible for 18 dealerships, a hands-on strategic leadership approach was the norm among all the CEOs. In large corporate groups the two candidates actually had to request their boards to allow them to retain a direct hands-on strategic leadership of one or two dealerships while carrying on their group director functions of between seven and 18 dealerships.

The key driver in all the cases was a sincere love for the industry and the business and the continuous interaction with staff and customers. In all cases the CEOs kept a close watch on, and involvement in, the direct management of the business.

5.2.4 Pillar 4: a determined expression of the self

I call this the expression of authentic self' in the business. It was in reflecting on the initial series of discussions that I eventually called the leadership philosophy discussions that the term authentic self expression began to form in my subconscious mind. Without fail every CEO referred to a steadfast adherence to personal values as a true measure of personal success and gratification.

Whatever the CEOs did seemed a reflection of values-driven authentic expressions underlying a strong understanding of self-knowledge; self-worth and self-motivation. Being true to oneself and one's own core values manifested itself in their being passionate, enthusiastic, and motivational.

Throughout all the observations the passion, enthusiasm, and motivational skills were apparent whether the discussions were one-on-one, or whether it was leading a team meeting or in a boardroom session. One CEO described himself as "a pop psychologist" and another one said: "I am a salesman to my top management team. I sell enthusiasm and motivation." Irrespective of the nature of the person involved the passion, enthusiasm and motivation were evident. Another CEO who seemed to me introvert and quiet described himself as "quietly enthusiastic".

5.2.5 Pillar 5: a responsible empowering of direct reports

All CEOs believed very strongly and understood that without people empowered to make decisions, they would not achieve the same level of success that they did. "I would spend all my time chasing after people and looking over their shoulders" was a constant refrain in explaining why it was necessary to empower not just subordinates, but all the ranks across the organisation.

Empowerment was not irresponsible but came across as empowerment within given guidelines. "My managers are all MDs of their businesses", was a common statement capturing the essence

of empowerment whether the recipient was a business unit manager or a cleaner. "I only hold the veto in all meetings" meant that another CEO allowed his people to make final decisions unless he really felt that the intended course of action would be detrimental for the business.

5.2.6 Pillar 6: a passion for people and developing a deep understanding of people

One of the values that quickly became apparent within each CEO and common to all them was a strong passion for staff and a love for working with people. The CEOs drove themselves to do the actions and things that would earn them the staff's respect, and at the same time build and foster trust among staff. They made time to understand people, what drives them, what motivates and de-motivates them. They were always aware of the family dynamics (divorces, sicknesses) of all the members of staff and they went out of their way to provide assistance where they could and to put the comforting hand on the shoulder when nothing much could be done at a corporate level.

The development of staff was not just lip service, but an essential business investment to ensure the success of the whole entity. All the CEOs spoke of utopia where it would be ideal to have, for example, all sales people fully qualified, ready and prepared to be sales managers. No expenses were spared when it came to training, educating and developing staff.

5.2.7 Pillar 7: implementing performance-driven management and remuneration systems

In all cases the passion for people was underlined by a performance based and performance management culture. However, it was interesting to note that it was not customary to dismiss staff purely for non-performance: there was always an introspection process that questioned whether the person had been adequately trained or whether they were in the right place or position in the first place. This would be followed by a retraining, repositioning or rebuilding process.

5.2.8 Pillar 8: a thoroughly detailed focus on business processes, measurements, and metrics to aid in business management

All CEOs revealed a very strong, thorough, and detailed focus on processes, measurements, and metrics (financials, sales, all manner of performance). In all instances, whether they had an

accounting background or not, in fact three had marketing backgrounds, all demonstrated an ability to make what they called 'numbers talk' and the ability to talk to different staff levels and make the financial numbers make business sense. The obsession with metrics and measurement enabled them to keep a finger on the pulse of the business.

5.2.9 Pillar 9: the need for high energy levels
All CEOs had strong practical belief in leading by example and in living this out at every available opportunity, "I would never expect of my staff what I can't or what I am unwilling to do." All spoke about the need to be highly visible throughout the organisation and later observation demonstrated that all had high levels of personal energy that sustained the physical effort of constantly walking around the business. Another discipline that was observed was the effort made to be regularly first to work and last to leave whenever possible.

5.2.10 Pillar 10: strong beliefs in relentless, formal and informal, communication across the board
The need for each CEO to keep a finger on the pulse of the business was embedded in the business through communication structures that were designed to ensure that formal and informal communication lines cascaded relevant information throughout the organisation continuously. Staff at lower levels in the organisation are kept aware of events via the involvement of workers representatives on key work committees.

One CEO was particularly upset that at one evening function a new member of staff came up to him and he (the CEO) thought that he was a customer, only to be advised by the former that he had been working for the organisation for two weeks. Despite being extremely busy and in the midst of a heavily involved MBO process, he still insisted that the communication processes should have informed him. He quickly reviewed and revised the communication process related to means of announcing the arrival of new entrants.

5.2.11 Pillar 11: a persistently relentless and prioritised focus on customers, both internal and external

Just as the passion for understanding and motivating people is a driver among the CEOs, so too is the passion for delivering superior service to customers. All activities are ultimately structured to the seamless delivery of excellent service to customers. These CEOs talk about it, preach it, walk it, build systems to make it happen, and they make it happen. When service delivery breaks down, they make sure they have systems to inform them and they take immediate responsibility and accountability for ensuring that corrective measures are taken.

5.2.12 Examples from personal leadership philosophy discussions

Listed below are five examples from the discussions with each strategic leader.

Sharkira Hawk:

"Business is simple: it's all about self-discipline, enthusiasm, hard work as a core part of life."

"My father used to say people can't steal your education, so I went to night classes after my high school and completed my accounting qualification."

"I have an entrepreneurial style, I give guys guidelines. They make money for the business and they also earn good money. I tell them don't ever lie once or I'll never believe you again. I also allow time to meet on Saturdays one-to-one."

"Well …. strategic planning; It's in you head, I live it, like a gun, I think quick and I work fast, you can't have it written down as A,B,C,D because the market is dynamic so you need to be responsive to the market."

"In life there are two important things to understand people, their red and green buttons. Red buttons are the things that pisses him off and green buttons are the things that turn him on and make him happy. Then you have to go out and buy a blanket and a hot water bottle and cover the red buttons and keep them warm and then push and *#!$ the green buttons. This will make people perform miracles and it cuts down on staff turnover".

Kehoe Banks:

"I have a great team: each person is a CEO of their own unit."

"We cascade performance management down to the floor-level."

"If someone doesn't row on the ship they get to know about it and are told get off the boat or do the rowing'".

"We have a 98 % achievement in employment equity (actual versus targets). I use everything, the brains, the legs and the hands."

"I recruit by looking at the people's energy because if there is energy something happens."

"I believe in communication. I communicate thorough the communication committee on which even a cleaner representative sits."

"I believe in empowering people to act. For example, we had a cleaner who needed a drivers license so she could help to move cars around. We paid for her licence training which she got, but it didn't stop there, today, now she is both a receptionist and a driver in the group."

Dove Patience:

"How do we retain staff so loyal to the business; this is not a threatening environment. Our top salesmen have been here for 15-20 years. We are 100 % performance driven so the longer they stay the more they earn. So we have no staff turnover at all."

Robbins M. Jackson:

"My leadership philosophy, well it's off the seat of your pants at higher and higher levels in the organisation. You make fewer decisions of great value. The higher you go, the less information readily available and the more the single big decisions, whereas at lower operational levels you make more operational decisions but with more information. At higher levels you look and gaze into your crystal ball e.g. our management buyout decision, because you have, readily available to you, quantitative information and not qualitative information, hence I say you make decisions by the seat of your pants."

"Going forward, my ability to sell is the key. At higher levels I am a salesman and I sell to management enthusiasm and motivation. My role becomes more of a pop psychologist as I powder their bums, clean their bums and keep them highly motivated."

"On my own personal style with people, I shift credit to the people and take responsibility for failures. All people like to succeed and all people like a cuddle."

"Once words are out of your mouth they are gone, so avoid knee jerk reactions. I saw, I conquered, I came. Instead, adopt the following, listen, think, respond. This process allows emotions to go away. My view is always to delay a decision if you can.

"One evening at a recent function I introduced myself to a new member of staff and he turned around and said: I know: I work for you. I have been two weeks in the company. Man I said to myself it's inexcusable not to know new staff within two weeks. These people make it possible for me to have an income and we are in this boat together. The hierarchy is for responsibility purposes only, we are all employees."

"I fall in love with staff. I remember talking to this short fat man, who always dated the most stunning blondes, who said: Boys fall in love with their eyes and women fall in love with their ears. I keep this in mind when falling in love with staff. You are not a good manager because of how you look but how you fall in love with staff."

"The Big Boss syndrome is gone. When staff make time to come to your office to talk, make time! They have probably been sucking up courage to do so the all morning".

Dolphin Structura:

"Corporate experience taught me core values in managing an organisation. I am building an independent group in a corporate process driven way instilling these common behaviour patterns:

- long-term planning;
- communication skills;
- positive attitude towards staff;
- importance of staff;
- ability to affect change; and
- understanding the changing environment."

"In this group long-term planning does not reach the second tier management, it's a board responsibility. Planning creates uncertainty and instability. Planning generates anxiety at operational level. Planning is therefore a top management process."

"We get involved in our staff's social lives; we involve counsellors; we know about pending divorces; because the health of our staff is important we get thoroughly involved."

"In any organisation trust stems from the CEO (I have been for that past seven years). Most retail shop managers carry bunches of keys tied to their waist due to mistrust; seven years ago, I redistributed all the keys that managers carried around and handed them to the responsible people. This led to a reduction in theft of parts, batteries, calculators. Our obsolescence is less than 1% where the industry benchmark is +/- 3 %. Trust is also strengthened by training, discipline, performance and socialising."

"A CEO always works and leads by example, you must have passion for the business you are in, otherwise you can't inspire people. My passion is the dynamics of the business, even after 33 years. The people and the processes. You can't window dress: you must have a genuine passion. I am not in the motor business: I am a manager of processes within the industry."

The Personal Leadership Philosophy made up the 1st level order events. The 2nd level order events were the complete observations.

As the analysis of all the field data continued I slowly developed a cohesive sense from all the emergent common themes that, while strategic leaders were different and came in all shapes, forms and sizes, the potential existed for the identification of the commonalities that made them successful. These commonalities were eventually synthesised into the pure leadership spider-web model.

5.3 The 2nd level order events: the complete observations

The discussions that I eventually termed the Personal Leadership Philosophy were the preamble to the complete observations that were the bedrock of the approved ethnographic methodology. Critical incidents were those that by mutual agreement with the leaders would afford me the best opportunity to observe their lived experience as leaders. These were identified, and the observations were structured around these.

The following critical incidents formed the core of the observations of leaders at work: board meetings, management meetings, vehicle sales meetings, parts sales meetings, after sales service meetings, customer satisfaction meetings, financial review meetings, staff performance meetings, mentoring and coaching sessions, meetings with customers, face-to-face contact

between the leader and various components of the organisation (staff, customers, subordinates) when the leader was not physically in the office (what I call face-time leadership), and engagement with other external leaders on business strategy and performance (what I call Leadership Engagement).

5.3.1 The impact of NLP training on complete observation

The observations, due to the in-depth training I received in NLP became a process of being aware of the obtaining environment. This involved note taking on the verbal language, the body language, the responses of the group members to what was being said or done i.e., the group dynamics, the perceived emotional temperature of the groups, as well as a continual record of my thoughts and on the spot assessments of the developments.

My objective in terms of keeping track of my thoughts was to enable me to self-reflect and keep my personal judgements from the observation, as well as to take note and accept the subjective influence of the self on the research. I had to consciously always seek to be above and aside from the situation as opposed to being involved subjectively. My approach, therefore, during the fieldwork was to document in as much detail as possible all that I observed in line with my research approach of being a complete observer.

Furthermore, I always sought to review and analyse my field notes as close to the day of observation as possible, as this enabled me still to capture some of the nuances I may have missed out due to the pressure of the real time note taking. This process was coupled with the on-going and continual cross-analysis of existing field notes with new ones. This approach enabled me to begin to see patterns and themes as they arose from the accumulating field notes.

5.3.2 Reaching thick description

As the fieldwork progressed, I gradually reached what is termed thick description, as I sensed that emergent themes were now repeating without new ones emerging.

My new found NLP-grounded ability to be completely aware of the environment and my increased experience and expertise from fieldwork practice enabled me to efficiently identify and categorise the emerging common themes and patterns. As I continued to analyse and study the field notes over and over again, I started gaining a sense that there was something else that typified the lived leadership experience that was eluding me, something in the way they used language on an ongoing basis.

This missing something continued to elude and bother me over a period of time. This nagging feeling, a strong sense of something in the language, continued until certain vacation experiences which were completely unrelated to the research triggered new streams of thoughts in my mind, that eventually identified the missing piece of the themes and patterns puzzle. The missing piece, as I will describe in greater detail latter, was the magic created by expert use of language, and which latter crystallised into a metaphor, that I initially termed Mickey's Magic Language Box but later simplified to The Magic Language Box.

5.3.3 The complete observation results

In order to proffer a better understanding of the flow of fieldwork note and data analysis I am separating here the observation results into two; firstly Common patterns/ themes that emerged from the ongoing analysis until thick description was reached and secondly The Magic Language Box, the clarification of that something in the use of language.

5.3.3.1 Common emotional and mental states

As I analysed the field notes and as I reached thick description in terms of repeating themes, I began to notice certain common emotional and mental states among the five leaders.

An online dictionary definition of state says:

> the condition of a person or thing, as with respect to circumstances or attributes: the condition of matter with respect to structure, form, constitution, phase, or the like: a particular condition of mind or feeling: (American Psychological Association (APA): state. (n.d.). Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1) (June 2006).

Emotional and mental states identified here therefore reveal the conditions the leaders exhibited as well as the structure of the conditions of mind and feeling which they sought to create within the meetings in which they were involved in. The following seven emotional and mental states emerged as common among the five leaders.

Humour: the ability to fuse a sense of enlightening humour into every engagement.

I observed that all the leaders consciously used humor and humorous stories, anecdotes and one-liners as a tool to relax all atmospheres, irrespective of the nature of the discussion at hand. For some of the leaders humour seemed to come easily as part of their nature, while others deliberately made efforts to be humorous.

Mr. Sharkira Hawk once said about humour , stories, and metaphors: " I can tell you stories till the cows come home. We are very informal and crack jokes continually while achieving results." My very introduction to his management team went like this: "George I can't spell your surname but you, you will get a sweetie if you can spell 'LZ'". This took me slightly off-guard but I apparently spelt 'LZ' correctly (as it sounded) and I got a sweetie and everybody laughed and visibly relaxed and then he said "You need to be sharp around here (accompanied by snapping of fingers: click! click!)"

Mr. Robbins M. Jackson as he first introduced me to his management team, he quickly dissolved any potential concerns over my presence by stating: "I have a slight concern about the role/ impact of an observer on the dynamics of the group I have never experienced everyone so attentive, maybe we should have you, referring to the researcher, attend our management meetings ha ha ha. I know it's non-participant but you are always conscious that there is someone there."

For others, it was a consciously practised skill. For example Mr. Dove Patience used practical aids, such as overhead slides, or reading off extracts to deliver the humor. Every three or four slides he would put up a quoted joke.

Despite the pervasive use of humour I never got the sense that it was offensive, as each leader seemed to have an innate ability to suit the humour to the individuals, groups and situations concerned.

Logic: the ability to break down complex issues into logical pattern that are easy to understand and deal with. I observed an almost uncanny ability by all the leaders to present and discuss any topic in such a logical manner that made understanding it easy. From hard financial analysis to discussions on strategy there was not one instance where a topic was not broken down into logical easy to digest pieces. What I found interesting was that in the personal leadership philosophy discussions, each leader displayed the ability to talk at conceptual, strategic and philosophical levels with great ease, while at the same time being able to switch to a hard-nosed practical nuts and bolts discussion on business issues. I remember once Sharkira Hawk exclaiming: "Gee, what is this, a philosophy class, I'm getting all soapy here ha ha ha!"

Envisioning: the ability to keep presenting the vision of the company in an exciting and engaging way while focusing on present operational issues. All the leaders consistently spoke about the vision of the organisation even when focusing on present operational issues. They seemed to realise that it was fairly easy for the ultimate corporate vision and direction to be lost while focusing on daily survival issues. The analogy that comes to mind as I reflect on this ability is that of flying a plane, using visual flight rules as opposed to instrument based flying, where it is quite easy to get lost if one keeps the focus on flying straight and level, in balance, at the right speed and altitude, but forgets to check the correct direction by visually referencing outside markers to the ultimate goal on the map. So, continually speaking about the vision, ensures that the organisation doesn't just seem to be on course but is actually on course.

In flying a plane using the visual flight rules approach it is also not enough to steer to the heading shown by the directional indicator. Similar to getting a sense that the organisation is on course, the pilot has to ensure that the directional indicator is periodically re-aligned to the magnetic compass. These leaders managed to keep on doing this by speaking about their vision at every possible opportunity and cross-checking the organization direction to the written down vision.

Detailing: a passion for micro-details, an understanding that if a problem is broken down into its tiniest detail it will be easy to resolve. Almost similar to logic, all the leaders demonstrated the ability to challenge every subordinate to break down a problem into its smallest micro components. At their level a missed financial objective at the corporate level, say lower than planned profitability, would be broken down to the minutest level of responsibility.

In one case I witnessed an analysis of profitability broken down to the level of a cleaner and the use of toilet cleaning materials. I noted in one discussion Mr. Robbins M. Jackson arguing that "the numbers had to be made to tell the story." Similarly, qualitative issues like poor performance would be broken down to the most manageable section of responsibility.

Only in this manner could the leaders attain control of the business. It is interesting to note that this level of managing the details tallied with an ability to pass on responsibility and accountability did not create, at least to my perception, resentment among the subordinates. On the whole there was a positive insistence on gaining clarity from presentations with continual use of flip boards and charts to clarify difficult issues.

Persuasive: the ability to do what could be termed management by being persuasive, where leaders, once decided on a particular course of action, kept at it in many ways until buy in was reached.

I was reminded of the expression: "like a dog with a bone". I found that all leaders had this ability to persist with their agenda until they obtained the necessary support. Sometimes the support process was slow and deliberate, at other times it was close to being forced through.

The latter, usually occurred where a decision of considerable impact had to be made within a short space of time. However, it was interesting to observe hours and hours spent on presenting and representing an idea from all sorts of angles and in all sorts of ways until the desired result was achieved. Dolphin Sructura once developed an elaborate and extremely convincing presentation to his board on a strategic idea in which he firmly believed in. From interactions with him, I knew it had taken him months to prepare the presentation. When he finally presented it in a board meeting to which I had been invited, it was indeed a sight to behold: the presentation included humor, mathematics, history, philosophy and a mini financial course. Needless to say after hours of intense debate, it was unanimously approved by the board. This approach, this persistence, could also be described as management by wearing you down with convincing argument.

Robbins M. Jackson had the task of selling a black empowerment transaction to his all white management team. The way he combined the two aspects of envisioning and persuasion to achieve support, provides yet another classic example of the states the leaders create and manage. On discussing the shareholder agreement that offered all key managers a stake in the business making them shareholder/ workers, he artfully reminded them that the invitation to management to participate in the buyout was purely his own generous initiative.

This set the tone for the rest of the discussion. He then went on a wide ranging discussion on diverse topics as the preamble to the actual empowerment transaction. He led a discussion on environmental and country changes and the need to alleviate white subconscious fears of black empowerment. He next discussed employment worldwide pointing, out that worldwide unemployment on average is 30 % and yet among South African whites unemployment was only 4.7 % "We have never had it so good! Black empowerment is not a threat, but an opportunity. The markets are growing as the black population now makes up 93 % of the population and increasing, while whites make up 7 % and decreasing. If we want to be part of this booming market we need to be empowered, we need an empowerment partner much more than any empowerment partner needs us". He then changed course and started talking about very personal issues discussed among white people in South Africa: "At braais, many start spinning

negatives because that stimulates debate and many people are easily destructively critical and look for reasons why things fail, and then they go out and create the failure. Fear of the unknown is crazy. The unknown represents unique challenges and opportunities to be embraced." Needless to say, despite clarification questions being raised by his team, he obtained the full agreement that he sought from them.

Empathetic: a strong sense of compassion towards people, not just as workers but as human beings with feelings, ambitions, goals and families.

Contrary to any personal beliefs I had about strong personality leaders being hard on individuals, I noticed that in all cases, even with the most bullish and aggressive leader, a strong sense of compassion towards people existed; where each individual in the organisation, from the direct subordinate to the lowest level cleaner many levels removed from the top leader, was accepted as a complete human being with feelings, ambitions, goals and families. Direct quotes from a personal leadership philosophy discussion with three of the leaders concisely capture this state.

- Robbins M. Jackson: "Every person of every color, irrespective of their station in the organisation, has the same aspirations; to earn a living; create opportunities and education for their children and each parent wants each child to do better than the parent."

- Sharkira Hawk: "Everyone has ambitions and we create opportunities for them to achieve them (we have adult literacy classes, so in the boardroom we have computers for adult basic literacy training) so we provide the tools to live successfully."

- Dolphin Structura: "We get involved in our staff social lives, where necessary, and at the company's expense, we involve counsellors; we know about pending divorces, because the health of our staff is important. We get involved thoroughly. One of our top salespeople wanted to be super achiever and to be rich, but he was struggling in accepting a pending divorce. He had kids and was living separately with wife and the kids were taking second place in the decision. We found out about this and four counselling sessions were arranged for him. The result was that he bought his own home, he has accepted the divorce. He has a new relationship with someone wonderful. He sees kids every weekend and he himself says:

now I feel better about myself. We are not in the motor business: we are in the people business. People are a passion for me personally, especially the development of people; we set aside and we need a budget for people who had never had these opportunities before."

5.3.3.2 Authentic self-expression through personal values

More than anything, and maybe at the same level as the use of language, the one thing that I became acutely conscious of was that every leader was a unique individual; none were the same in temperament, each had his own unique way of being. This was also highlighted by the realization that out of 51 Meta-Programs the five strategic leaders had common responses in only 18 of them. Something else that stood out in all this diversity was that each strategic leader had crystallised personal life values that they strived to adhered to in all situations, what I have called authentic self-expression through adherence to personal values. It sounds simple enough and in a sense all it says is that each strategic leader was true to his own true self rather than living up to other people's ideals or bowing to societal pressures.

Some examples of authentic self-expression through personal values are presented below:

- Sharkira Hawk: "You always need to create win-win relationships". " I hate golf, I have never played a day of golf in my life, all these executives who say deals on the course, let me tell you something, that is *#!** because deals are struck in the board room and not on the course."

- Kehoe Banks: "I believe in the power of the mind and full potential and people striving towards their goals, I can't handle non-performance, I believe in empowering people to act and If someone doesn't row on the ship they get to know about it and are told get off the boat or do the rowing.

- "I believe in management by walking around, I call everyone by name, I speak to people by walking". "The question to ask is: 'who switches the light on in the dealership? You determine if it's dark or light in your dealership If you walk around and smile and greet people then you switch on the light. I believe in evident commitment. I manage and so they should manage by example; there was once a DP who was on the golf course when customers where complaining and he got the crap, he got into trouble, but he has since changed."

- Robbins M. Jackson continually stated: "Manage your business like you manage a family and manage staff like you manage children" because his strong belief was that the organisation was one large family. And "without a management team you haven't got a business. Our business is built on the team and not on individuals".

- On explaining why he turned down a buy-out offer by a large group, "Decide who you are! Decide what you want! And Back yourself up!". "Another key fundamental is that you must know your people and you must show and earn staff respect."

- Dolphin Structura: " Our business is driven by the passion in what we are doing. We get up and love going to the office. It's a purpose for waking up. It's passion in what we are doing. This is not a textbook business but rather very much from the heart." On explaining the very formal corporate processes that form the bedrock of his leadership style even though his business is independent and entrepreneurial "due to my corporate background I deliberately think corporately in an independent retail situation," Thus, one finds in his business similar processes that would be found in a large stock exchange quoted organisation, thus all processes driven as a corporate with formal meetings with formal agendas. "Corporate experience taught me core values in managing an organisation. I am building an independent group in a corporate process driven way with such common behaviour patterns as long term planning, communication skills, attitude towards staff, importance of staff, ability to affect change, and understanding the changing environment." On describing the essence of the corporate culture: "we have a respect for everything and everyone; peers, budget, making profit and customers; we stand up and greet customers and allow them to sit down first and anyone who treats them with disrespect is fired."

- Dove Patience: "I am a marketer, I drive revenue and I work with people, my business spend on advertising is three times the industry average, that's what we believe in so that's where we invest." On staff retention, the impact on the business and the working environment he creates. "This is not a threatening environment, we are 100 % performance driven, so the longer staff stays in our environment the more they earn."

5.3.3.3 Face-time leadership: additional common states

Face Time Leadership were the times that I observed leaders directly dealing face to face with a situation or subordinate. These occurred sometimes as we walked through the businesses, usually to and from meetings, or on general 'let me show you around' walks, or in some cases in structured meetings. I observed three mental and emotional states that the strategic leaders commonly used during face-time leadership. These states are focus on each individual; customer focused orientation; and encouraging and uplifting.

focus on each individual

Each leader demonstrated an ability to control overall group dynamics as well as to focus attention on each individual they interacted with either within a group basis or on a one to one basis. This was typified by the ability to recall each individual's personal and business circumstances. A direct quote from Mr. Robbins M. Jackson best demonstrates the importance and value of each individual staff member: "If my kid is in trouble at 2 am, I get up and go straight away; similarly your staff needs to know that if they run into trouble at 2 am you will be there."

customer focused orientation

The focus on customers is dual orientated; the internal customer, the other staff member, is regarded as being that important as the external customer, the one who actually drives sales revenue. While most of the emotional and mental states described in this section relate to creating an empowering environment for the internal customer, all the leaders exhibited an almost paranoiac focus and attention on external customers. The realisation that without a steady flow of external customers there would be no business was preached at every given opportunity and also translated into every possible corporate practice, through intensive on-going training programmes.

- Kehoe Banks: "I greet service customers and give them my own card to call if they have queries."
- Robbins M. Jackson: "Customers are a priority; if I am visiting with staff and customers come in, the staff must go to the customer." At one time he took to his management team a

proposal for the organisation to participate in a national Best Company to Work for Survey, which measured the view of employees/ staff about the organisation, the results of which would be made public in national newspapers. His motivation was: " It's important to find out how staff feel because if we are pushing for customers to have a good experience then if our staff are positively unhappy then when the client/ customers come here they get a positively terrible experience. " (I recall noting the clever use of words that had everyone in deep reflection). The decision to participate in the survey was unanimously agreed upon.

- Dolphin Structura: "My office window overlooks the showroom and I observe customer interactions. CSI (Customer Satisfaction Index) is driven from the top through the culture of the organisation; we must always guard against being distant from the customer. We take a sample of 50 customers per department per month and bring them in for coffee or to see the new dealership. This also provides good feedback for service levels and we implement arising suggestions very quickly. Later customers are called in to test implemented suggestions. As a result, we have made very good friends with customers and on Saturday we have some just come in to have coffee and just hang around with us. Our customers are our friends and we have genuine relationships. We have a respect for everything and everyone; peers, budget, making profit, customers. We stand up and greet customers and allow them to sit down first; anyone who treats customers with disrespect is fired!"
- .Dove Patience: He personally chairs all meetings on Customer Satisfaction and demands and expects each manager to give feedback on 'corrective action' with his role being to facilitate discussion with the exception of situations/ cases that appear difficult, where he provides guidance to the solution.

encouraging and uplifting

The ability to encourage and uplift staff was one that each leader continually exhibited. Sometimes gently and warmly, and sometimes in a manner that could be construed to confrontational, the five leaders always took advantage of every opportunity to motivate staff. One leader (Robbins M. Jackson) even described himself as a pop psychologist: "At higher levels I am a salesman and I sell to management enthusiasm and motivation. My role becomes more of a

pop psychologist as I powder their bums, clean their bums and keep them highly motivated. You must have the right people. If our staff are the right people we can do anything. I keep playing pop psychology because I believe in people! I trust in people! People are Prime! Prime! Prime! With right people you can achieve the goal versus location! Location! Location!"

Sharkira Hawk always took advantage of all opportunities to encourage and recognize managers; even in what may appear trivial he would say: "That's good asset management Bernard. Well done!"

Robbins M. Jackson once had to deal directly with a business leader (a direct report to him) who was facing huge self-esteem issues due to poor business performance. An account of how he handled it follows below.

In a preamble before talking directly to the manager in question whose business was in a turnaround situation and was making losses, Jackson started speaking about general group dynamics: "In any group we must always understand the dynamics in that there is always the unofficial leader, the knowledgeable guy, the clown and the one who takes the beating; so be careful that if the role the person plays becomes destructive then it may affect the group dynamics." He then turned directly to the manager in question, whom he had prepared for the ensuing discussions and I remember thinking as the discussion unfolded, this is absolutely brilliant' "You are feeling inadequate so you are waiting for somebody to pick you up, you are playing the downtrodden but get out of it, you know what you are worth so back yourself up!" and to the rest of management, "As I always say, some vagrants out there, some are down on their luck and some are by choice, you never know when you are down on your luck, so rather help your colleagues out when you can".

Sharkira Hawk demonstrated an ability to use financial analysis skills to create a positive picture out of a negative. His group financial director painted a dismal picture based on a presentation of results and concluded by saying that "despite the hype over our new vehicle sales our results are not good". To which Sharkira Hawk replied and said: "Guys we do not give ourselves enough credit." He immediately proceeded to do a verbal in-depth analysis of the same financial data adjusting for known market anomalies, and thus showing the real trading results as positive saying: "These numbers are really quite good". He then pulled out his own pre-prepared spreadsheet indicating all the trading trends for 10 years since 1996/7, in all departments which

demonstrated and showed even more, the positive nature of the results. By the time he was done the mood was optimistic again; he understood how to press his people's 'green buttons' and inspire them to greatness.

In other instances the leaders demonstrated an uncanny understanding of what made people behave and how to trigger positive behaviour in staff.

Dolphin Structura: "A good salesman is a high maintenance person because he is usually highly emotional, have unstable or highly unstable family lifestyles and are financially unstable excellent when performing and bad when not performing. We, therefore, get involved in our staff's social lives. We involve counsellors. We know about pending divorces, because the health of our staff is important we get involved thoroughly."

5.3.3.4 Leadership engagement: additional common states

Leadership Engagement sessions were those sessions that I was privileged enough to be allowed to observe as they occurred outside the normal working environment and were closed high level sessions where leaders met with other leaders from non-competing organisations in the same industry; i.e., different franchises to discuss ways to improve their businesses' performance. The five emotional and mental states discussed below were those I found common to all the leaders in these environments.

Inquisitive

Each leader I observed became both a teacher and a student: a teacher in the sense that he shared his business experience openly with the other leaders, and a student in that he became very inquisitive about other leaders' best practices seeking to know and understand as much as possible in the given time.

Expanding the vision

While in their intra-organisational meetings each leader continually expressed the vision. I observed that in the Leadership Engagement sessions with other leaders they expanded more on

what their vision was, seeking not buy-inn but rather feedback and critique from their colleagues. It was almost a sense of a high-level business school session, where the thinking of like wise leaders was eagerly tapped into; a sense of here is my business as a case study, tear it apart and let me have your most valuable input.

Rising to the challenge to improve own business

The Leadership Engagement sessions are nothing more than opportunities to share best practices among the gathered leaders. However, a certain characteristic pervaded all the sessions I was fortunate enough to observe: the leaders jokingly teased each other about poor performance and in return those on the receiving end of this humor, and all almost had an area for improvement within their businesses, would easily rise up to the challenge and place bets on improvement targets. All the action plans were always recorded in the minutes. In most cases, by the time of the following session, usually within three or four months they would have implemented the corrective action and the results would show it. No one ever passed up a chance to take up a challenge to correct poor performance.

Humility

The order of the day in each minute seemed to be humility whether one was being criticised, was criticising, receiving praise or being praised. Almost all leaders seemed to realise that they were in the presence of peers, great leaders like them, and that pride would be of no value but would instead be scorned.

I have heard of cases where, in the past, certain leaders were asked to not come back to the voluntary sessions because their attitude negatively affected the dynamics of the group sessions.

It is interesting to note that participation in various groups is voluntary, but by invitation and mutual consent of all the group members. Unless a crisis occurs, most leaders attend the sessions which are held all over the country on a rotation basis, depending where the businesses of group members are located.

I recall that one day I sat in observation of a group in which Dolphin Structura participated where one of the leaders' father, a well-known and respected industry expert, had suffered a major stroke the day before, but the leader, who had taken over his father's business, made time to attend the session after passing through the hospital. The comment passed by the group facilitator, another well-known industry expert, and mutually agreed with by all the other leaders present was: "Your Dad would have wanted you to be here contributing to these businesses and also receiving input from all the other stars in here!"

Respect for differing points of view

Each leader exhibited a great ability to receive feedback from others, to accept criticism and respect different points of view; the debates were always intense, the intensity arising from the challenge to be factual in argument or presenting opposing points of view. Coupled with humility there was never a sense of aggression in debate. In the same vein where a particular leader did not accept a different point of view, I always got the sense that respect still ruled the day.

5.3.3.5 The NLP visual, auditory and kinaesthetic template

My NLP training provided me a processual tool that I used as a support observational process. My observation methodology was that I made as much detailed notes in my ever expanding field note book as possible, details of everything I heard, saw, sensed and reflected upon. In addition, I also used the observation template I developed from my NLP training (Appendix 5) which revealed to me two consistent kinaesthetic representational systems, called the computer mode, which can be described as Mr. Cool/ Mr. Calm, and the leveler mode, which describes a factual and congruent approach (Bodenhamer and Hall, 2000). These two systems describe the common disposition of all the leaders, despite their diversity. In some instances some of the strategic leaders used a combination of both the computer and the leveler modes.

Below are some examples of The Computer Mode:
- An interesting observation to note was Robbins M. Jackson's steady and consistent physiological state in all situations I observed him. In this instance, a general discussion on

insurance premiums led to a discussion on the poor state of company cars, accident claims and so one but while the debate became emotional, among those present Jackson maintained the same physiological state: same voice tonality and physical stance, able to strongly emphasise his viewpoint and at the same time bring what I perceived and sensed to be a chill on the issue, supported by disciplinary threats. Yet through out all of this he did not change tone and physical stance. "Interesting,"I remember thinking and noting.

- Kehoe Banks continually demonstrated calmness when conversations broke out across the room; he would maintain team/ meeting control by simply stating: "Guys, sorry, sorry we can debate this for hours but let's have one meeting at this stage."
- Dove Patience: In one meeting I observed that he maintained his voice level, medium-toned, firm, but non-threatening (this is of course my own subjective interpretation of composure which is useful because my assessment was consistent across all leaders).
- Robbins M. Jackson always remained calm even when discussions broke out across the room, allowing such discussion to run out/ peter out without interfering but always bringing the conversation back to the topical issue.

Here is an example of the Leveler Mode:
- Robbins M. Jackson, when explaining to his team a proposed Management Buy-Out (MBO) and corporate restructuring, exhibited no emotion but made extensive use of whiteboards and flipcharts to explain the intricacies of the deal. He made a straight forward explanation of the MBO, the black empowerment buy-in, the proposed equity structures and the other options open to management, all the while making continued use of expressive hand gestures, calmness, an easy manner and direct eye contact.

Here is an example of the use of both the Computer and the Leveler Modes:
The issue of black empowerment and the growth of the black market in the South African automotive retail industry, as in all industries, provokes immense debate and raises emotion at times. Dove Patience, like all the other leaders, always entered into such debates from a

cold factual perspective. Here is a direct extract from my field notes as I experienced it, which reveals how I felt he handled such a discussion.

- He (Dove Patience) is leading a discussion on the changing demographics of the market. It is a very logical (almost cold factually) presentation on the growth of the black market and the need to understand, accept and continue to restructure the business to take advantage of this. No emotion is displayed but just a presentation of the hard cold facts and the reality of the need for the business to adapt to the new reality. All in the team concur.

On a physiological basis, all the leaders continually exhibited an open-arm/ inviting/ accessible and consistent physiology suggesting a subtle subconscious invitation to them as a warm accessible person. Below are some direct extracts from my field notes to support this observation:

- Sharkira Hawk: Placatory in responding to discussions and comments; sits up straight; uses both hands expressively and more so full use of the right hand (palm, wrist, fingers).
- Dove Patience: His physiology is always open palm and hand gestures and he sits upright. In another session this is what I observed: as usual, he (Dove Patience) opens with pleasant welcome jokes that sets the atmosphere for the meeting. He is standing and his right arm gestures are very open, welcome, with expressive use of palms and fingers; never tight fisted but open and inviting.
- Robbins M. Jackson always maintained a consistent physiology, even throughout a three hour meeting, fingers interlacing open and shut, sitting up straight with forearms on the table, the only movement being the palm of the hands with eyes straight at each speaker.
- Dolphin Structura's physiological posture was usually in the format of the left hand being very expressive, usually with legs crossover and speaking slowly, deeply and deliberately

5.3.3.6 Meeting dynamics

I always kept my senses alert and aware to the dynamics of the environment the leaders created. I perceived the leaders were creating highly energized environments. All five leaders exhibited

high intense, in a positive sense, and focused levels of personal energy. I never once had the sense of laid back, casual, laziness, even the most reserved always came across as if they were a loaded human spring full of energy and passion for life.

5.4 The 3rd level order : video taped meta-program questionnaire

These were the videotaped interview sessions which sought to elicit the meta-programs common among all the five strategic leaders.

The importance of Meta-Programs in this research was best explained by Bodenhamer (2005) when he wrote, in his validation report to this study: "In explaining his project to me, Mr. Nyabadza wrote to me his goal, "I set out to determine what effective leaders do and how they do it and how they think about it'. Do Meta-Programs have a place in such a study? Yes, most definitely, yes, in my view. Because Meta-Programs deal with the structure of how we think and therefore how we behave, they are of utmost importance in determining not only what leaders do, but, more importantly, how they do it. Indeed, NLP began as a model for understanding the how of subjective experience and it continues to do the same. Meta-Programs, as unconscious mental filters, are critical to the understanding of subjectivity."

5.4.1 What are meta-programs?

According to Bodenhamer (2005) meta-programs' are perceptual filters which people learn to deal with and filter the world around them; in other words meta-programs help people select what to pay attention to from the infinite bits of information available for processing.

Most of the Meta-Programs operate on a continuum. When there are choices on either end or pole this can lead to extreme versions of the particular Meta-Program and the creation of a Driver Meta-Program. When a person can easily move back and forth along the continuum, they have a high degree of flexibility of consciousness. This gives them more choices and power of response in different contexts. Meta-Programs shift and change depending on context. This gives the ability to operate with different Meta-Programs in different contexts, environments, and situations.

This also explains why Meta-Programs should not be used or confused with personality traits that define what a person is. These are not written in stone. They are descriptions of how we have learned to sort and process information. Rather than solidified personal traits, these are ways of functioning, ways of running our brain. These Meta-Programs are those unconscious mental filters that we all have through which we sort our reality. These unconscious filters determine not only the what, but also the how of what we allow into our brains. As such, they also determine how we shape the incoming information for personal experience. As we speak, we again filter our outgoing information through these filters. Meta-Programs answer such questions as:

- How does this person think-and-emote?

- How does this person talk, act, behave, and relate?

- What processes and patterns describe this person's style for sorting (paying attention to information)?

- What mental operational system does this person use in remembering?

- What human software (ideas, beliefs) does this person use to think?

- How effectively does this way of thinking work?

- How well do I like this way of emoting/somatising my ideas?

- How desirable do I find this way of talking and languaging?

- How resourceful does this way of sorting behaving actually work?

By focusing our attention on how people actually function in terms of their cognitive processing (thinking), emoting (somatising ideas into their bodies), speaking (languaging self and others), and behaving (responding, gesturing, relating, etc.) we discover not what they are, but how they actually work in any given context or situation.

What is the value of this focus? Recognising how a person works enables us to figure out their model of the world (their mental paradigm) that describes their internal "reality." This increases understanding. This enlightens us about 'where the person comes from.' It also increases our sense of empowerment. Why? Because in knowing how I work, or how someone else works, enables us to evaluate and match that working."

The Meta-Program responses by the five strategic leaders provide an insight into how they think. The Meta-Program questions were 51 in total and out of the responses the five leaders had common responses in only 18 of them.

5.4.2 The common meta-programs

The 18 Meta-Programs were all the five leaders were in agreement were:

Emotional Intensity/ Exuberance: the measurement of one's emotional exuberance/ intensity or lack thereof as one emotes, especially in relation to others and to tasks from shy, timid, restrained, threat-sensitive to adventurous, thick-skinned and bold (**common response**: experience emotions with lots of intensity, value emotions, boldness).

Self-Integrity: your preferred way to think and relate to your ideals, especially your ideal self, and then how you evaluate these as to how well or how poorly you live up to these ideals (**common response**: live to ideals, harmoniously integrated).

Ego Strength: your preferred style for typically responding to internal needs or external hardships, also how well do you face the world, reality and facts either as stable or unstable or reactive or proactive(**common response**: stable and pro-active).

Emotional Coping Style/ Stress Response: the preferred way a person relates to 'stressors' in his or her life either as passive (flight) i.e. moving away from dangers, stressors and threats or fight (aggressive) i.e. the process of moving towards, and going at threats, dangers or stressors (**common response**: fight/ aggressive/ go toward).

Somatic (Body) Response: the preferred way of processing data as either very active and quickly or more slowly and reflective (**common response**: active and quickly).

Adaptation: the preferred way that we deal with the environment either as judging and controlling (making the world adapt to us) or perceiving and floating (navigating life by adapting to it) (common response: perceiving).

Goal Planning and Realization: the preferred style for relating to goals either as a perfectionist or as an optimiser (common response: optimising).

Reason - Modal Operators: your preferred style for operating in the world, hence your modus operandi, either as viewing the world as full of possibilities, can do's or viewing the world as full of impossibilities, can't do's (common response: a world full of possibilities).

Direction: the preferred direction that you generally take in terms of motivational strategy either moving towards what you want or away from what you want to avoid (common response: towards approach).

"Time" Tense: your preferred way of sorting or distinguishing between events that have already occurred, those now occurring, and those that will occur (common response: future orientation).

"Time" Experience: your preferred way of experiencing time and how you internally code your sense of historical "time" and its duration from event to event over a period of "time" either as "inside of time" i.e living in the eternal now and so becoming spontaneous, systemic and random in orientation and behaviours or "outside of time" with a greater perception and awareness of time and thus more sequential, linear and on time (common response: outside of time).

"Time" Access: your preferred style for accessing your memories (common response: random)

Attribution Style: the preferred way at looking at problems, difficulties, challenges, etc. as being challenges filled with opportunities (Best-Case Scenario) or as being undesirable and fearful in the sense of threatening (Worst-Case Scenario) (common response: best-case scenario).

Information Gathering Style: the preferred way and source for processing data from either external, outside of you, or internal sources, inside of you including your own thought processes (common response: internal sources).

Epistemology: the preferred way of gathering information from things as either using the five senses or the intuition (common response: the intuition).

Perceptual Categories: the preferred way in discerning between broad categories either as "black or white" or as operating on a continuum (common response: continuum).

Reality Structure: the preferred way of thinking about what you consider 'reality' either as a world of things being static, permanent and solid at the micro-level or thinking in terms of process, movement, flux, non-linear reasoning and a systems orientation (common response: think of things in terms of process and flux)

General Response: how we respond to people, things, information and events according to the style and energy expended either as congruence i.e., feeling in accordance with something or as incongruence i.e., thinking and feeling one way while responding another (common response: congruence).

I have set out below some direct quotes (responses) from the transcribed notes of the videotaped interviews, as examples, that relate to five common meta-programs.

Emotional Intensity/ Exuberance: The measurement of the emotional exuberance of a person from shy, timid, restrained, threat-sensitive to adventurous, thick-skinned and socially bold

Sharkira Hawk: "I will go for a risk. I'll go out and do something. I love a challenge, and to me it's quite satisfying as a person. Sometimes I am a little single minded in it. Ok, but if I really believe in something I'll go out and do it and go for it.

"Something that doesn't bother me is social class, it doesn't mean a row of beans to me if I am not socialised. It's not an issue in my life if I haven't been invited to the chairman's dinner or some

other golfing event. In fact those social events are. I regard the guys there as sometimes being a bunch of suckers, because all they want is the glamour and to be seen. To be seen doesn't mean that I can do the job. It's the result that counts, I am very hands-on when it comes to that type of thing, umm if a guy comes to work you can smell him before you see him, when you see him he has this fancy jacket and tie and big pocket-chief and so on, it doesn't mean he can do the job.

"A guy comes to work and gives me 45 degrees and so many academic programs, it doesn't tell me he can do the job. Ja that's one thing, and it's the old problem in life, it's the connection between the mouth and the fingers. Some guys have a short circuit, it gets stuck somewhere here (elbows) what they say doesn't come out here (fingers). Social and to be out and clubs and to be seen and so on, that doesn't make the job. You've got to use this (fingers) and this (head).sometimes you need to do it.

"They tell me you do more business on the golf course, I think the guys that say that are the biggest bullshitters under the sun because you don't have to be on a golf course to do business. I have done lots of business, but I have never played a game of golf in my life, so, so much for the game of golf. You want to look at my bottom line, you are welcome to check the temperature, golfing doesn't come into the equation".

Kehoe Banks: "I tend to act immediately and sometimes not evaluate it properly, when it comes to those kinds of things, so yes I am more of a risk-taker; energy and passion. You can't go anywhere else. Adrenalin is the thing that keeps you going."

Dove Patience: "It's a difficult one because there are certain times where you have to be risky, even when you are having fun or in business but I think mostly cautious, but there are times that you do take a chance. (I am) probably quiet and deliberate but quietly enthusiastic."

Robbins M. Jackson: "I like experiences. I think that's what life is. At the end of the day life is a series of experiences and if you are not prepared to go out and try them at the end of day you are not going to have experiences to look back on and enjoy. So, I think I am very comfortable with the risk of the unknown. And again, this is a personal opinion, you will find most business people are pretty risk orientated and if they do not have an adversity to risk they are not going to do well. Sure you will be evaluating the level of risk but you must go out and experience them. Imagine

how boring life would be if you didn't. I think it depends on the situation. We would all like to believe we have this energy. I think it's how other see me rather than how do I see myself, for me to say high energy levels. Ja I'd like to believe it, but it's more somebody else's interpretation. For me to say I think I'd be blowing smoke up my own butt."

Dolphin Structura: "With some nowadays, in the past it was lots of adventure, nowadays, it's more predictability. I need to know where I am going, how it looks. As I said to you earlier, I am not content with surprises anymore, although I make a quick observation, there are certain things I will not go to, for argument's sake, mountain hiking this afternoon. I am not going to take a bicycle and try to go up a steep hill, not anymore. I think I am an animal or I am becoming an animal of habit on the one hand and I experience risk in a business environment that's where I can still participate but when it comes to energy I think I have lost the self-confidence. I have got this problem because of time, not age."

Self-Integrity: Your preferred way to think and relate to your ideals, especially your ideal self, and then how you evaluate these as to how well or how poorly you live up to these ideals

Sharkira Hawk: "The past has the lessons when you fail to live up to your ideal and we must take the lessons learnt into the future to make sure we don't repeat the mistakes, so you look to the future, but with the experience of the past guiding your future and your efforts to live up to your ideals."

Kehoe Banks: "No definitely not torn and un-integrated. I think I feel totally in control."

Dove Patience: "It's a difficult one because I don't think you can be perfect so you never really live up to what you think you should be. There are times you are torn and conflicted and there are times you feel satisfied, but we are human so we do err, but overall, you strive to continually live to your ideals even if it's difficult."

Robbins M. Jackson: "I am very comfortable. I feel very integrated and I will tell you why. You know if one wants to look at it, the term self-actualising, I am very comfortable I have achieved what I wanted to achieve. I have been very lucky and fortunate in life in that I have had a lot of experiences and have being in position to have those opportunities, so I feel very privileged and I am very comfortable. How do I stack against others? Well, quite frankly, does it matter? In many

respects, independently of things, in many respect I probably don't stack up against anybody else. There are many guys who are far better sportsmen than me, far better businessmen, far better this and far better that. At the end of day I said I have had a lot of privileges and lot of experiences so I am very comfortable with me. I need to stack up to one set of people, my family, my wife and children and as long as I meet their standards and then at the end of the day that's it and obviously there is the extended family, my work colleagues and the rest of the employees of the company. It's very important I stand true to them. I think I am doing that so I am comfortable with that."

Dolphin Structura: "(I am) integrated."

Ego Strength: Your preferred style for typically responding to internal needs or external hardships

Sharkira Hawk: "Get annoyed. Get over it as quickly as possible without showing emotions, and getting on with your life and trying to address whatever negatives have come out of it and fix it up. Don't let a problem lie around. If something has gone wrong, I prefer to grab it as quickly as possible and put it to bed before the sun sets."

Kehoe Banks: "Life offers frustrations and problems that is my answer, but yes, when a certain situation happens I would most probably hold onto that for a while in my mind, it would bug me but I wouldn't take it with me for a whole day. Somewhere I'll drop it after I have dealt with it obviously, and hope that I have made the right decision about it, but I will revisit it latter, and maybe tonight in that quiet time you will think, I wonder what happened there, tomorrow morning just follow up on it again, but I won't carry it around with me the whole day. I don't think it's healthy. It just adds to the stress and I think at the end of the day it will interfere with the motivation you have to give to other people."

Dove Patience: "I look for the next opportunity. Life offers problems and you can solve them."

Robbins M. Jackson: "I think I accept. They need to be solved, so get on with them."

Dolphin Structura: "That's life. That's life. I often say to my people if the dear Lord wanted us to have life and happiness and just enjoy it he would have had, and this may be very crude, ten pricks and one finger, it's unfortunately not the way this life was meant to be, you have got ten fingers, and it's just one of the other pleasure parts of the anatomy. So I think, that's life."

Emotional Coping Style/ Stress Response: The preferred way a person relates to 'stressors' in his or her life

Sharkira Hawk: "It depends; I am not quite sure what you mean by the situation, I guess the situation. I hate negative people. If you put a proposal to them. We have got them in our organisation. Unfortunately they exist and I call them the Dr. Nos. You can't do them away: they are there. You can't wish them away. So all you do is you manage through the process, but if you want to do something and you know Dr. No is in the process in the environment, you try and avoid Dr. No and find Dr. Yes. Ja running away, I guess you can use all three, depending on circumstances.You use either or depending what your responses are from the different people."

Kehoe Banks: "I think I deal with it immediately. If you put things behind you, if you delay, you will not get the results that you need. So, I will go for it immediately and deal with it at that point in time."

Dove Patience: "Luckily this business is evolved so that we do not have too many of those, but I think the biggest threat is when you are dealing with an emotional or threatening customers because you don't know how they are going to react,because sometimes it's difficult to calm them down, and unfortunately the motor business tends to be an emotional business. In terms of stress, if I had to say it that's probably the most stressful part of the business, its customer problems. No you have got to fix it and fix it quickly and get it sorted out so that it's past. There is no ways you run away."

Robbins M. Jackson: "Again this is very much me personally. I always believe if an event has occurred you must challenge it, because if you are just going to go away from it, you haven't resolved it, whatever event occurs. If an event occurs it has been caused by someone. You need to resolve it, be it that you actively take no decision or a decision of no action. Or if you are looking at both sides of it, here is a decision of no action or a decision either said of that, get all the facts, take your decision then resolve the issue. Be a positive event or a negative event, you need to address it. By not addressing it you are not going to resolve it. It's not going to go away. You challenge it and face it, then if you are a personality that needs to digest that, then once you have done that, it then you can go off and contemplate but you can't just get away from it. It is not going to help me, help you or help anybody around you. Yet again at the risk of laughing,

especially in a management role if you do no address it you are letting down all those around you, because they are not going to trust you to resolve the event just by watching.

(George: I am going to ask if you can give an example of where you faced a high stress situation and how you dealt with it) I think what you determine as high stress for others breaking a thumbnail, is same as crashing an aeroplane is high stress for others. I think it depends on what you consider high stress. And again it's a personal situation and a personal thought. I don't think I have faced anything that for me is high stress unless you are sitting with a situation facing me with a challenge of one of my children's lives, that for me would be high stress (emphatic placing of both hands on the table), but besides that there is no such thing as high stress, when an event occurs, you manage the event. Whether you are going to cry about it or laugh about it, it doesn't actually matter. The thing is handle the event and laugh about it, because if you are going to cry about it the event has occurred and you have to take an action, if you are going to laugh about it the event has still occurred and you still have to take an action, so what the hell, get on with it, no matter how bad it is. In six months time it would be just a memory. Face the issues, handle it and get on with it.

"I struggle with this modern concept of stress. What is stress? You know ten years ago everybody suffered with this whole thing with tension and we all took Valium, well not me, but everybody started taking Valium. I mean Valium was the biggest selling thing around. I think we should use Valium as a stimulant. We should be relaxed. Let's face the event, it's one of these George, and I couldn't give you an answer. I don't believe anything is that stressful, I really don't and maybe I am wrong."

Dolphin Structura: "Go straight into it! Go straight into it! And the reason why we do that or I do it, because it's the shortest way to finalise it. It's less time consuming and it brings you to the point of resolving much earlier. If you go back you have to reminisce, look at new processes. It probably doesn't fit into the old processes if that's the issue and then eventually two, three days latter or two, three months later you get to a conclusion. In our type of business one thing you want to do is get to conclusion as soon as possible so you can go on with your life. You don't

have time to build up files that you have to re-examine before you go onto the next process. I think this is our business.

"A high stress situation to me is the spark to the battery. I think I live on stress. If I didn't have stress, I think I would just disappear. I need a good certain amount of stress in order to be 100 % productive and 120 % productive, maybe not good for one's health, but I think this service industry needs high pressure, good stress, and then to find your stress relief but here you need to operate under pressure and under stress. I think that's the way I live with it."

Somatic (Body) Response: The preferred way of processing data as to either very quickly or more slowly and reflective.

Sharkira Hawk: "I am not an analytical person, I don't say ja, but, oh Ja Nee. In South Africa I think we are the only country in the world where we answer a positive question with a negative, (A typical answer to the question: Are you well?' would be Yes, No, I'm Ok. (Ja nee ek is raak). Ja again it depends on the enormity of the situation you are facing.

"If your memory bank has a lot of experiences you can draw I'll be inclined to react much quicker but where there is no memory bank I have to go sit down and think, but I don't think I'll be the sort of person who will write down screeds and screeds of paper. Ja you might take a one-pager and say this is what's now and this is what I am going into and where do I differ? It takes a five minute process, but it's certainly not hours and hours of research that goes into it. Maybe I am talking with a bit of an advantage of having being in the business for as many years as I have. Fortunately our business that we in is not one that requires a physicist or rocket scientist."

Kehoe Banks: "I tend to go in immediately and act and I know sometimes it's not the right thing. Sometimes you have to evaluate and make sure what the consequences are. But, in most situations I act and it's to do with time constraints and other issues that are waiting to be dealt with, I normally go in immediately and see if I can sort it out and make a decision immediately."

Dove Patience: "I think it depends on the situation, if it is a major event then I prefer to pend it and look at it from all angles and if it's something that needs to be solved you need to make a quick decision and live with the consequences."

Robbins M. Jackson: "I think George a lot has to do with the impact and how widespread you believe the impact is going to be. I think if the event necessitates an instant decision then you must make it, then you live by it, back it, until you find it's incorrect, then you acknowledge it and then you change it. Alternatively, if it's going to have a major impact, we have a simple philosophy which is practised in our group: listen, think, then respond.

"It gives you time you can always say to them like an unhappy customer, I don't have the relevant information at hand, however I will get back to you. It gives you a chance, even if you do have the information Ok, it gives you a chance not to have a knee jerk reaction, so that you can think it through carefully and then respond to it. So, always if you want to diffuse a situation, it is the same with a staff member give them a time when you are going to get back to them, then get back to them at that point in time, even if it's to say "I am terribly sorry I need to extend a bit further", but just do it, so that they know you are responding to it, but if you can buy yourself time because one of the biggest problems is words, most hurtful, most damaging.

"Once they are out, you can't take them back but if you have an action, you can write something you can rub it out, but once words are out of your mouth, they are most damaging and also as we said before, the way you say it. You might be in a bad frame of mind, maybe you didn't have something you should have had last night, you are not a happy camper, and you respond badly, that's why I say you always need to buy yourself some time, but like I said it depends what the event is. If it needs a response then you respond. And again we talk about measuring on a continuum, if we say we are driving along a road and we have an accident or you come across an accident, you can't decide well I will think about it and come back tomorrow, you need to get out there and help that person you need an immediate response. If you decide you are going to need a new dealership as in our business you clearly need to take several days, several months to

think about it, get all the necessary information, and then make a decision and move forward, so yes it depends on the event, it really does."

Mr. Dolphin Structura: "(how I process data), very quick. Very quick."

5.4.3 Meta-programs and the how of being a strategic leader

According to Bodenhamer (2005) in his validation of this research's use of NLP and meta-programs in observing the lived experience of strategic leaders "In order for any executive (strategic) leader to operate according to The Magic Language Box, that executive (strategic) leader must operate from and out of certain key Meta-Programs." (see Appendix 2.1)

The Meta-Programs common to the five strategic leaders indicate that an effective strategic leader must function from a stable/pro-active ego strength; be thick-skinned and socially bold; be able to respond to stress in an aggressive manner by facing necessary stressors in a resourceful manner; not only know who he or she is, but he/ she must behave congruently with himself or herself; be able to take considered risks; be willing to see problems and difficulties as challenges filled with opportunities; not dwell in the past but learn from past experiences and pro-actively look to the future; be able to gather data pro-actively from all sources while having the capacity to store it internally with the ability to access memories on demand; be able to process data effectively and make decisions without procrastinating; be flexible in operating in the world and be able to operate beyond black and white extremes; be able to adapt to a changing environment; be willing to see reality differently and not be rigid in own perceptions; know where he or she wants to go; how to get there and be determined to be successful in the attaining of his goals but in a very practical manner making necessary adjustments along the way and develop the capacity to respond to people (others) with congruence.

5.4.4. The uncommon meta-programs

The list of 51 meta-programs is generally separated into five sections; mental (style of cognition, reason or thinking), emotional (style of emoting), volitional (style of choosing), communication (style of responding or behaving), and conceptualising (this is the highest level that refers to causation, morality, values and the self).

The 33 meta-programs that were found not to be common among the five leaders are spread across the five sections. These 33 meta-programs suggest, again, that becoming a strategic leader is not something a person is born with but rather something that is possible to any person who aspires to be one. An example to illustrate this is that the five leaders were either big picture global thinkers (deductive in nature) or detail and specific oriented (inductive in nature). This study clearly indicates that it doesn't to one's success as a strategic leader whether one is a deductive or inductive thinker. Related to this is another meta-program where there was no common response, the philosophical direction, which relates to how a person's mind thinks in terms of philosophy that is whether one cares more about source, origins and "why" or more about solutions, processes and "how" to get on with things. The different responses indicate that one's philosophical orientation is not a common indicator of success as a strategic leader; what is critical, however, as this study has shown is for one to develop a personal leadership philosophy and to be true to that at all times.

People, just as strategic leaders, adapt to life in the world differently. The meta-program, adaptation style, also uncommon among the five strategic leaders, relates to whether people move through the world seeking to establish procedures, rules, and organised ways for how to do things or whether they see the world in terms of options and choices, inventing new ways to try things, explore alternatives as trailblazers, inventors or pioneers. This research has suggested that success as a strategic leader can be achieved by both the entrepreneur, trailblazing across the automotive industry landscape, or the corporate executive operating within the rigid frames of an established organisation.

A set of uncommon meta-programs that fall within the "conceptualising" section bear mentioning here as they also strongly point to the personal differences that existed among the five strategic leaders in the study and also to the fact that any type of person can become a strategic leader. These meta-programs are:

- ✓ List of values (what does a person deem as significant and meaningful)
- ✓ Temper to Instruction (whether one takes orders well and complies with instructions or defines himself in terms of his will and freedom of choice)
- ✓ Self-Esteem (this refers to one's understanding about the value and dignity of the self. Self-esteem is either viewed or felt as conditional and based upon external factors in

one's culture, money, looks, status or achievements. A person who feels this way is forever concerned about they are doing on the self-esteem scale. Self-esteem can also be viewed as unconditionally given and therefore full, complete and unassailable. This kind of person operates with little ego concerns since he is centred).

✓ Self-Confidence (this refers to one's feelings of confidence, trust, or faith in their skills and abilities. It also refers to how much faith in particular skills in a given context a person operates from).

✓ Self-Experience (this refers to the beliefs and understandings that a person operates from in defining himself, and so in how he experiences himself. Self-definitions can be based on a wide variety of things: thought, emotion, body, roles, experiences, degrees or choice).

Another inference from this is that personal experience of life plays a significant part in a strategic leader's development. This study, as demonstrated by its methodology, did not set out to explore the strategic leader's lived experience outside of work. These uncommon meta-programs strongly suggest that work and private life are inextricably linked and to some undetermined extent one affects the other.

5.5 The Magic Language Box

A certain magic spell is spun and cast around organisations, using language, by strategic leaders as they engage with others. The magic is experienced when one is in the presence of the strategic leaders and is understood when one listens carefully to how they deliberately use words to achieve desired ends. In August 2006, I sat through a Disneyland presentation called Fantasmic that displayed how the use of language (words) assists in the creation of a magical spell that even has adults cheering for Mickey Mouse as he slays dragons. Out of this experience I developed the phrase Mickey's Magic Language Box to describe how leaders use language to create meaning and desired results out of all engagements with followers, customers, shareholders, other leaders; in fact all discussions whether on an individual or group basis.

I recall becoming completely caught up in the magic and there is no more appropriate description of the effect itself than what Disneyland itself states on their official Mickey Mouse website http://www.mickey-mouse.com/dlfantasmic.htm .

I reproduce below a complete transcript of the description of the show Fantasmic from the Disney internet site. Hard as it is to describe the magic and how the metaphor came to be, I seek here to relive the experience and to assist the reader to catch the magic and therefore the meaning of the metaphor The Magic Language Box. Harris and Barnes (2005) state that stories are tools of leadership, and that stories, allegories, and metaphors are powerful tools for communicating complex concepts in unforgettable ways.

The bold script is a direct extract from Disney's description of the show on their website. The rest of explanatory notes are mine and they seek to capture my mental journey to the moment when the metaphor crystallised.

The story as it is written here may appear pedestrian: I hope its simplicity reveals how magical the process of coming up with the metaphor was. What is of paramount importance is to understand how the Fantasmic story quickly became a metaphor for the research. One of the most important catalysts for this happening is that my mind was saturated with the raw data of the results.

<u>TABLE 1: The magic of Disneyland</u>

5.5.1 Fantasmic – the source of the metaphor

It's hard to know where to begin trying to explain the magic of Fantasmic! You really have to be there to feel it.

As the fieldwork progressed and the data I gathered reached what is termed 'thick description' in my mind and being I had a strong and deep understanding of the lived experience of the strategic leader but, just as the opening line of the description of Fantasmic above, "it's hard to know where to begin trying to explain the magic of" the lived experience of leadership by the strategic leader. The pure leadership spider-web model clearly shows the different aspects of what I discovered as the lived experience of the strategic leader; however, unless without being there during the ethnographic study, it would be difficult to get the real sense of the "magic" the leaders create. The term Mickey's Magic Language Box captured in my mind the essence of how strategic leaders used language to create the experience of "magic" in their organisations while the Fantasmic show was the creative invention that birthed this metaphor in my mind, finally giving a label to what I sensed in my mind.

Guests will wait, sitting on a cold sidewalk, for two, three or four hours just to get a good view. If there are two shows, they will wait to see both of them. Nothing sad happens during the show, but when the lights go up, some adult guests are crying, overwhelmed by what they've just seen. After the show, the kids want to know "where'd the dragon go?", and "how did they set fire to the water?" Why do we cry? How do they set the river aflame? Why do we repeatedly wait for hours to see Fantasmic!? The answer? Oh, simple. It's concentrated pixie-dust. Pure unadulterated Disney magic. More Disney magic in one place than there has ever been before. And probably will ever be again.

Unlocking the black box of leadership, getting to understand the lived experience of the strategic leader has been a unique experience akin to pure unadulterated Disney magic.

Here is the written description that appears in the Disneyland handout called "Disneyland Park - Description Book for Guests with Hearing Impairments". Obviously it contains spoilers, and is ©Disney.

As the lights fade, the river is quiet and dark. Then, a very faint musical note is heard, swelling and growing into a dramatic chord. A brilliant cone of light shoots up from the island into the sky, circling -- but with nothing inside. Another chord is struck, and the cone vanishes, revealing Mickey Mouse. The music becomes glorious and exciting, as Mickey brings the river to life.

The strategic leader brings life to the organisation. He sets the frames that govern the experience of work-life within the organisation. He has the ability to make the life of every staff member a pleasure or a misery, dependant on the emotional and mental states he personally brings to bear on the work environment.

He then appears on giant water-mist "screens" as the Sorcerer's Apprentice, from the film Fantasia. The musical score from "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" and the theme "Imagination" interweave to accompany the action, as Mickey conducts animated shooting stars and live firework comets flying across the sky. The mist screens are filled with twinkling stars that dissolve into colourful, blooming flowers. On stage can be seen huge flower petals, changing colour and transforming from a pink Camellia to a yellow and white daisy to a purple pansy to a red rose. The petals then become huge green leaves and combine with on-screen animation to become the flora and fauna of the jungle.

If you allow yourself to see the stage as a metaphor for the organisation, then you can begin to appreciate that the dynamics that affect the organisation's health are numerous and multi-faceted. The strategic leader needs not only the ability to fully comprehend the nature of these dynamics but also the ability to assume control over them. The research suggests that the strategic leaders observed continually demonstrated this ability.

As fog begins to float over the river, the rhythm and exotic sounds of the jungle can be heard. Through the fog can be seen an enormous Kaa, the snake from Jungle Book, slithering across the island with piercing beams of light for eyes, searching the audience as he makes his way through the jungle foliage. The Jungle beat grows as floating stages carry King Louie and neon-colored monkeys across the river, which has been transformed into an imaginative jungle where everything moves to the wild beat. The music changes abruptly to a pulsing, contemporary rendition of "Pink Elephants on Parade" from Dumbo, as animated pink elephants appear both on-screen and on the island. Suddenly, the elephants seem to be puppets dancing on strings, and then vanish, leaving the strings behind.

As I experienced this live show, in my mind, I kept experiencing the staged show as a metaphor for any one of the organisations the strategic leaders led. Here, I was reminded of how the strategic leader continually demonstrates the ability to change the tempo of the music in the organisation. If you think of an organisation as an orchestra, the harmony is dependant upon the conduct of the strategic leader.

Now the magical strings manipulate three huge puppets, with Pinocchio in the center. On-screen we see Jiminy Cricket underwater, calling to his pal Pinocchio, in gurgling desperation. A colorful montage of underwater creatures appears. Jiminy then encounters the huge eye and teeth of Monstro the Whale. A combined sequence of film and live special effects show the angry, tail-thrashing whale creating a storm-like effect on the water, with real water splashing around as Monstro stirs up the sea. The sounds of crashing waves and thunder rumble through the audience, as we witness a ship, on-screen, being tossed in the storm.

Organisations led by the strategic leaders in the study operate in a normal business world. Accordingly, they experience all the environmental dynamics that every other organisation does. They face and have to deal with difficult competitive markets, macro economic variables that

continually pound against their corporate walls, with a potential to impact negatively not just the business but staff morale. Each strategic leader in the research demonstrated an ability to lift up the morale of employees in the face of difficult and competitive pressures.

A loud canon shot takes our attention to the Pirate Ship, coming around the bend, filled with action. Captain Hook, Mr. Smee, Peter Pan and pirates jump, climb and swing on ropes in a battle fully scored like a scene from an epic swashbuckling adventure film. Following the ship is a huge crocodile -- "tick-tocking" as he goes, scaring Captain Hook up to the crows nest, as the ship disappears into the on-coming fog. The "Imagination" theme comes in again as pink and blue clouds cover the river. Snow White and her Prince, Ariel and Eric, and Beauty and the Beast all float by, as if in a dream ballet in the clouds, each so happy to have their dream come true.

In the midst of the real challenges of business the strategic leader is always a beacon of hope. The reality, however, is that sometimes business challenges may pose a huge challenge to the staff; after all they are the ones face to face with this reality on a daily basis. It is quite possible that faced with the day-to-day grind of business, the magic spell of the leader may dissipate.

It was interesting to observe that strategic leaders made it a point to present a positive inspiring front to their staff at all times. One strategic leader even went to the extent of not including junior staff members in planning sessions dealing with negative or significant external challenges as he did not want bad news spreading through the team and bringing down morale.

But the beautiful music starts to sound a bit haunting. The Evil Queen from Snow White appears on stage, calling for her magic mirror -- which appears in animated form, on-screen, and says, "In the Magic Kingdom, there are many beautiful princesses far more fair than you, my Queen." The sinister Queen seethes with jealousy and hatred as the mirror continues, "In Mickey's imagination, beauty and love will always survive."

All the strategic leaders continually demonstrated a positive can-do outlook to any challenge. They not only believed that they could overcome any challenge, but they lived this in the way they spoke and made plans for their businesses. Furthermore, they always sought to frame discussions and engagement in a positive frame, just as in Mickey's imagination "beauty and love will always survive."

In anger, she moves to her bubbling cauldron, where she creates a brew of evil magic to transform herself in the Wicked Witch. The magic mirror transforms into the ugly face of the wicked witch, who says, "Imagine THIS!" On-screen, we see her face dissolve into that of the sea witch, Ursula, from The Little Mermaid, as out from the river and fog come the tentacles of a 20' tall Ursula, laughing violently as she passes. Back on-screen, the face of Ursula fades to reveal only her evil eyes -- which transform into the eyes of the horrific Chernabourg, from Fantasia. Images of skeletons on horseback, riding across the sky, appear on-screen as Chernabourg watches, flames dance in his hand. Then a real burst of flames explodes on the island and Maleficent, from Sleeping Beauty, appears. Mickey Mouse sees Maleficent and shakes in his shoes as she points to him and says, "Now you will deal with MY imagination!"

The strategic leaders always demonstrated a positive outlook to life and a firm belief that they were able to respond positively to any situation that might arise in their business lives. Above, we see how Mickey Mouse "shakes in his shoes" on seeing Maleficent; even the brave do quake. I did not observe any situation of a strategic leader shaking in their shoes when faced with a difficult situation. However, they all said and demonstrated in observations that when difficulties arose they were able to respond positively. However, in one discussion during a walkabout I received a unique insight into how one of the leaders dealt with the reality of business challenges on a day by day basis when he said: "You have to motivate yourself everyday, even when sometimes little doubts spring up about the importance of what you are doing."

Another burst of flames signals a dramatic transformation as Maleficent grows 30' tall and

changes into a ferocious dragon, on-screen. But, as lightning flashes, you can see through the animated sequence on-screen to a huge 40' three-dimensional dragon, taking over the island. She lowers her head and breathes fire over the river, igniting it into a sea of flames. The evil side of imagination has now created an island of terror. Only Mickey can save himself from his own imagination, and he appears as the Brave Little Tailor, ready to do battle.

Mickey's realisation provides another insight into the thinking of the strategic leader; the strategic leaders' view of the competitive environment is that one can positively respond to its challenges, no matter how dire they may appear. One said: "the only limit is our imagination." The strategic leaders continually inspired hope and optimism.

With electrifying laser special effects, he defeats the dragon and all the evil forces. On-screen, we see the dragon, zapped by Mickey's positive powers, swirl into the air and vanish in a burst of pixie dust.

The leaders are continually positive about dealing with life and business challenges and at every given opportunity they encourage their followers to view life and its challenges from a positive angle. One strategic leader said that "many people are defeated by fear and demons that do not even exist."

A sparkling, twinkling presence can be seen and a magical sound begins to grow, as Tinker Bell appears. Flying about the sky on-screen, she waves her magic wand and showers the Mark Twain with pixie dust as it comes around the bend. The Riverboat is loaded with all the lovable Disney characters, waving banners and cheering their hero, while fireworks cascade over the rails of the Mark Twain. As the Riverboat reaches the dock, a flash explodes on top of the boat, revealing Mickey Mouse as Steamboat Willie at the helm. Mickey pilots the boat past the audience in a festive celebrational finale, and then disappears into the fog.

From the strategic leader I perceived as introvert, to the one that appeared extrovert, the research demonstrated that those that were seen by their staff/ followers as being firmly at the helm inspired loyalty and commitment.

Suddenly, Mickey appears in a splash of light up on the Cider Mill, now as Sorcerer Mickey. The music swells and grows, as he conducts laser beams that crisscross over the entire river area, creating a sunburst effect radiating out from Mickey, proving that the magical powers of his positive imagination are stronger than ever.

The character Mickey depicts a picture of the charismatic leader. This research proved that successful strategic leaders did not always fit the mould of the charismatic. What became clear during the research is that the strategic leader is the core driver of the corporate culture. It is he that either lights up or darkens the environment and in this research every leader was observed to be making a conscious effort to be the source of positive inspiration at all times.

As the musical theme "Imagination" builds to a final chorus, a glorious display of fireworks is added to the river spectacular. Mickey lifts his arms upward as more fireworks shoot from his fingers.

On one level the strategic leader appears to be the super hero and yet at other times he is a normal human being .....

Then, in a flash, Mickey magically disappears from the Cider Mill and reappears again, center stage, in his normal character.

The leader is just a normal human being, facing the normal daily challenges of building an organisation.

All the effects and music abruptly freeze, and Mickey says to the audience, "Some imagination, huh? Ha! Ha!" And with that, all the effects vanish, leaving the brilliant cone of lights empty. On a final musical note, the lights go out, and the river is quiet and dark once again.

You may wonder what one feels when it is all dark, well the appreciation of the magic sinks in; it was somewhere in these moments that the metaphor Mickey's Magic Language Box began to form within my mind. And to recap from where we began above:

But when the lights go up, some adult guests are crying, overwhelmed by what they've just seen. After the show, the kids want to know "where'd the dragon go?", and "how did they set fire to the water?" Why do we cry? How do they set the river aflame? Why do we repeatedly wait for hours to see Fantasmic!? The answer? Oh, simple. It's concentrated pixie-dust. Pure unadulterated Disney magic. More Disney magic in one place than there has ever been before. And probably will ever be again.

It was in these magical moments of reflection that the metaphor Mickey's Magic Language Box was crystallised in my mind.

5.5.2 Language magic: the dimensions of the magic language box

In the previous section, I explained how the metaphor Mickey's Magic Language Box came into being. From this chapter onwards, I shall simply refer to this metaphor as The Magic Language Box.

The Dimensions of The Magic Language Box expanded on below is developed from the language patterns heard consistently and repeatedly in all parts of the research. To recap the following critical incidents formed the core of the research:

- observations;
- board meetings;

- management by walking around;

- leadership engagement;

- resolving customer issues;

- management meetings;

- staff meetings; and

- mentoring and coaching sessions.

As a preamble to discussing the findings that form the core of The Magic Language Box, I would like to discuss some findings from the literature review that support this view of language magic. This part of the literature review happened after my Disney trip and it captures some of the essence of the magic of language. Enfolding relevant literature during data analysis is a very key aspect of qualitative methodology.

5.5.2.1 The Power of words

It has been argued that leaders can use language to create and facilitate relationships that can change their organisations and that leaders, by thinking differently about language, can align change efforts with words that do inspire change (Denning, 2007). This argument captures to a great extent the philosophy behind what the metaphor the Magic Language Box stands for: the ability to impact organisations using language.

5.5.2.2 The power of stories to motivate and inspire action

Phoel (2006:p3) describes how a programme director at the World Bank who was at a loss for how to convince his colleagues of the value of knowledge management and had become frustrated at the failure of his highly technical and well constructed PowerPoint slides built on solid research to get a support decision from his colleagues, used a narrative, a simple story about a health worker using the internet in a remote town in Zambia, one of the world's poorest nations, that "succeeded in persuading Denning's listeners to envision a broader, more ambitious future for the organisation. It succeeded where analysis and argument had failed."

This demonstrates the immense power of using stories to obtain buy-in where even researched analysis and argument had failed -,one of the dimensions of The Magic Language Box. The leaders knew that stories could not only get someone listening, but had the power to ignite the imagination. Effective leadership demonstrates the ability to tell relevant, not frivolous, stories at the right times while at the same time steering clear of rosy stories that underplay bad news (Phoel, 2006).

One enduring theme in the way the leaders used language is to create and maintain a positive environment. Their goal is always to inspire people to act and to see possibilities instead of defeat.

5.5.2.3 The power of metaphors

Metaphors are argued as being effective tools for inspiring audiences, increasing the vividness and retention capabilities of messages, as well as excellent triggers for evoking emotional reactions and conveying deeper meaning to others (Mio, Riggio, Levin and Reese, 2005).

The leaders in the study understood the power of metaphors to convey a deeper meaning of the messages than that which would be conveyed from the facts alone. Samra-Fredericks (2003) commenting on the use of metaphors, as a linguistic resource, argued that they (metaphors) enabled the researcher to explain complex, deep, and integrated forms of knowledge and belief systems in ways that facilitated interpersonal dialogue and debate.
Morgan (1997) effectively used eight metaphors to present his views of organisation theory. Kohnen (1999) latter agreed with Morgan's (1997) premise of organisational and management theories been structured around images (metaphors) that assisted in the deeper understanding of organisational dynamics. Metaphors clearly have an acknowledged power to convey meaning and deeper understanding of both strategic leader messages and organisational life. Kohnen (1999) argued that Morgan's (1997) eight metaphors facilitated his (Morgan's) view of organisation theory.

The brain, it has been argued, has the infinite capacity to self-organise, synthesise and produce patterns, descriptive forms and metaphors from random different experiences and input embedded within it (Kohnen, 1999; Morgan, 1997). It is from this way of processing information that my brain provided the spider-web metaphor.

5.5.2.4 The power of strategic questioning

The research showed that each of the strategic leaders observed had the ability to ask powerful strategic questions at the right time, within conversations, and in ways that built trust and minimized fear (Brown, Isaacs, Vogt, and Margulies, 2002).

The ability to use strategic questioning, to evoke discussion, and the ability to facilitate the kinds of conversations that result there from is a key dimension of The Magic Language Box. Over and over again I observed the strategic leaders facilitate difficult conversations around issues such as Black Economic Empowerment, changes in shareholders and competitive marketplace pressures. By assisting their subordinates ask the right questions about the future. Brown et al., (2002) argued that in unstable environments strategic leaders should engage the whole organisation and assist it in asking relevant questions at the right time.

In identifying the themes that make up a relevant and powerful question Brown et al., (2002) said it should:

- be simple and clear;
- be thought-provoking;
- generate energy;
- focus inquiry;
- surface assumptions; and
- open new possibilities.

The observations of the strategic leaders revealed that they had the ability to pose powerful questions that created deep conversations around critical issues. For example, Dolphin Structura, in seeking to facilitate discussions about the future, while in the present the business was in a

boom period, asked the following question to his top management team: "What would be the scenario if the economy cools down at one percent per annum for the next five years? What is the economy's growth became stagnant".

This kind of questioning was observed to shift the thinking of the managers present to a different logical level almost independent of the euphoria derived from the current boom results. These conversations always led to the solutions being generated by the stakeholders. Brown et al. (2002), argue that the discovering and asking strategic questions within an organisation implies that the people therein have the ability to confront and respond positively to difficult issues and challenges.

5.5.2.5 The power of conversations

The Magic Language Box is about powerful and meaningful conversations. Brown and Isaacs (1996) describe a powerful conversation as one that led to new insights, action and perspectives on a given problem. They further argued that an organisation's ability to engage in meaningful conversation determined the extent to which it could create its own future or live with the future that the environment gives it.

A good example of engaging in a powerful conversation was when Robbins M. Jackson engaged his senior management team in talking about the positives of accepting Black Economic Empowerment versus the perils of ignoring the same.

In seeking to understand the difference between powerful conversations and the many exchanges that occur within workplaces Brown and Isaacs (1997) interviewed hundreds of executives across all cultures around the globe. They identified the following common themes: a sense of mutual respect; time to really talk together and reflect; listening to each other; acceptance and not judgment during the conversation; an exploration of questions that matter; the development of shared meaning; a process of always learning something new; strengthening of mutual commitment; and strengthening of relationships. These findings bear close resemblance to the dimensions of The Magic Language Box.

5.5.2.6 The quality of conversations

Most companies do not have the ability to engage in quality conversations besides those that are routine, lifeless and of no significant value to anyone (Gratton and Ghoshal, 2002).

In this research it was observed that the conversations the strategic leaders engaged in and those they facilitated were structured, relevant, meaningful, analytical and genuine usually leading to new insights and new conclusions.

5.6 The seven dimensions of the magic language box

These seven dimensions are:

- ✓ understanding that language incorporates words, physiology, metaphors, quotations and preferring to use all of it;
- ✓ using humour to create a light and constructive environment and metaphors to convey meaning;
- ✓ carefully choosing words that lead to rapport and consensus;
- ✓ appreciating the deeper, subjective and higher level meaning that underlies the use of language, including the use of rhetorical devices, and therefore consciously using language to elaborate and provide and stimulate deeper meaning for issues being discussed;
- ✓ using language to set frames that govern, modulate, organise, drive and control meetings knowing fully well that all experience (including decision-making) occurs within such frames;
- ✓ (Mickey's) Dragon Slaying Declarations (using words to destroy followers' fears and doubts and restoring, rebuilding and instilling hope and courage); and
- ✓ (Mickey's) Victory Chants (consistent speaking (evangelising) out of the corporate vision, endlessly, tirelessly and relentlessly).

5.6.1 Examples of the seven dimensions from the observations

Understanding that language incorporates words, physiology, metaphors, and quotations and preferring to use all of it

Kehoe Banks: his constant physiology creates a welcoming atmosphere: standing or sitting upright; right arm open; expressive use of palms, fingers; direct eye contact and continually sweeping the room; a medium, firm and non-threatening voice tonality.

Sharkira Hawk: On the power of words: "Loose lips sink ships; the good Lord gave you two ears and a mouth so that you could listen twice as much as you speak."

Dolphin Structura: "Growth created some havoc as far as cash flow is concerned. We should not rape the used car department in terms of new vehicle profitability. The Used Car franchise has not been a 'roaring' success. The anomalies in salaries have been corrected and will wash out this year."

Sharkira Hawk: "I can tell you stories till the cows come home."

Sharkira Hawk had included himself in the proposed incentive structures his response was as follows: "I said to him 'when the ship sinks, the captain is in the s*#@t but when the ship gets to harbour the captain should also be thanked.'"

Robbins M. Jackson: "If you want to pull off a plaster, you either whimper along or pull it off once, scream and it's done!" (When arguing the need to make an immediate loss write-off decision).

Sharkira Hawk repeatedly demonstrated a positive manner of insistence on obtaining clarity from each of his manager's presentations, and he continually used a flip board to clarify difficult issues via a strategic questioning process that always evoked deep discussion around critical issues.

Sharkira Hawk: He always made numerous quotes and references to Tom Peters throughout the meetings. He also had a demonstrable way of using stories and metaphors to communicate. Here are some examples. "We take an immediate knock on provisions (right hand in a crack the whip motion)." On another occasion he said to his Finance Manager: "How much more can you crank out of the provisions?" (Right hand cranking up motion) and yet to another manager, "Use your area as a washing room, things coming in and out." (Both hands gestures indicating washing machine circular motion).

On new profit targets "We have a challenge with the profit stretch we were given," and on accounting policy, "We have a conservative accounting policy and I'd rather have a company with a sound balance sheet than one where I am always flying against the wind, so that if something happens, I am in s*#!t." On a suppliers' incentives to just two managers: "Let's bring it to the table and lets make a call and lets make a joint decision" and on views about an account with the factory that is at the lowest level, but not zero "It's not the absolute Utopia".

Kehoe Banks on potential acquisition: "When we have the money in the service budget we must bite the bullet and buy the asset (printer/scanner)".

Robbins M. Jackson: On the road travelled so far by original shareholders in the business: "We have lost a lot of money. We took a hell of a pounding, and we took a bath". But on elaborating on the future, "Our future opportunities are limited by our imagination."

Using humour to create a light and constructive environment and metaphors to convey meaning
Sharkira Hawk: "We are very informal and crack jokes continually while achieving results." And so he continually used humour throughout his deliberations: "With age nothing happens to your memory but your forgetfulness increases."

During a working lunch he continually mingled factual feedback with jokes or told facts in a comic manner. Once when seeking buy-in on a proposed venue for a management incentive resort he

went to great pains to imitate a drunk architect describing the novel reward resort, which in reality had cleverly designed ablutions opening out to the bushes, as follows: "the bathrooms are open plan so you can get erotic washes for the romantic and those not so young."

Carefully choosing words that lead to rapport and consensus

Sharkira Hawk on creating rapport, cooperation and buy-in always re-stated/ repeated the communication heard and the agreed way forward: "To recap XX (name withheld) you will … " or "Before the next board meeting, me and XX (name withheld), must re-work this whole thing to confirm that we have not stepped out of line." On proposing how to deal with a staff member who had inadvertently missed out on a reward trip because of problems with a temporary passport: "I would like to see a bit of clemency on the guy, let's see if we can get a refund of airfares and accommodation and refund the guy in full".

Dove Patience: He always used constant encouragement of the team and acknowledgment of positive results to such an extent that missed targets were never negatively highlighted or portrayed as failures. Constantly I heard: "It's been a good week guys! Well done guys!"

Robbins M. Jackson on handling a difficult discussion on sexual harassment in the workplace hailed new tougher and stricter legislation stating: "The veil has been lifted".

Sharkira Hawk: Some often repeated words during conversation:

- Maybe we should ……
- There are doors I must open ……
- I wouldn't ……
- XXX (name) makes a good point ……
- I would like to consider ……
- I would like to propose ……

Kehoe Banks acts a facilitator in all the meetings, managing the interaction, keeping it light and humorous, engaging, and encouraging each manager to generate his/ her own solutions and corrective actions, only suggesting solutions in what seem difficult situations with an overall effect of creating a sense of full ownership of the business by the managers.

Appreciating the deeper, subjective and higher level meaning that underlies the use of language, including the use of rhetorical devices, and therefore consciously using language to elaborate and provide and stimulate deeper meaning on issues being discussed

On proposed corporate change in titles from directors to managers for tax reasons, Sharkira Hawk stated: "I will oppose it vehemently because once you give guys a directorship title you can't take it away because it affects image, stature, motivation etc. I mean why call a doctor a health-worker or why call a director a senior manager? We are working with people and we must always bear that in mind. For the cost of a few bob, now I have to tell my fellow director that he is now a senior manager. It is also useful for marketing as well to say to a customer 'Have you seen my MD of … instead of the Manager of …?'"

Robbins M. Jackson: "I could sell the whole business to a large corporate group for R100m but you decide who you are, decide what you want, back yourself up. The group wanted to give us cash as they are cash flush and they were prepared to give me a cushy salary and a job but I turned them down."

Robbins M. Jackson: "It's important to find out how staff feels if we are pushing for customers to have a good experience. If our staff are positively unhappy then when customers come here they get a positively terrible experience."

Dolphin Structura (On first board meeting with new black shareholders and when welcoming them): "I am glad to be your brother and what I have heard about XXX Investments (the black shareholders' organisation) philosophy is true. (Directly to the new black partner): "There is a

brotherhood in the investment and I am glad to have you as a brother. We are glad to be part of the XXX Investment group." On other occasions Dolphin Structura constantly made use of the phrase: "I think" that seemed to create an atmosphere that gave subordinates the chance and opportunity to become involved without fear.

Several of the leaders in the sample made use of rhetorical devices in their conversations. Here are some examples of rhetorical devices and how they were used by the leaders:

Contrast

Contrasts describe a subject in terms of its opposite and according to Hartog and Verburg (1997: 367) it is "the most widely used resource of orators."

Sharkira Hawk describing the organisation's accounting policy: "We have a conservative accounting policy and I'd rather have a company with a sound balance sheet than one where I am always 'flying against the wind' so that if something happens I am in s*#!t."

Robbins M. Jackson when selling to management the decision to be part of national best Company to Work for Survey: "It's important to find out how staff feel. If we are pushing for customers to have a good experience then if our staff are positively unhappy then when the client/ customers come here they get a positively terrible experience …"

List

The three-part list is another effective and popular rhetorical device. Hartog and Verburg (1997: p368) state that "one of the main attractions of three-part lists is that they have an air of unity or completeness about them, and that the most plausible explanation for this is that three is the minimum number of elements required to show that there is indeed a list of similar items, two consecutive items would show the possibility of a link to a more general class of phenomena which is confirmed by the third item. Once this common thread is established less and less is

gained by adding more items (they become redundant. This means that three is both the minimal number to unambiguously establish a connection and the maximally economic number for doing so without becoming excessive."

Sharkira Hawk on elaborating how meetings are structured for effectiveness: "We go with the flow; we are very dynamic; and let's not hold up the meeting with detail".

Robbins M. Jackson on explaining why he refused a buyout offer from a large corporate group: "You must decide who you are, decide what you want and back yourself up!"

Dolphin Structura on explaining the passion him and his staff had for the business: "We get up and love going to the office, it's a purpose for waking up and it's passion in what we are doing."

Position taking

Hartog and Verburg (1997: p370) state that with position taking: "The speaker starts by giving a more or less neutral description of a certain state of affairs. After this expose' the speaker strongly agrees or disagrees with this state of affairs."

Robbins M. Jackson in a preamble to talking to a manager in a turnaround situation and whose business was making losses: "In any group we must always understand the dynamics in that there is always; the unofficial leader, the knowledgeable guy, the clown and the one who takes the beating; so be careful that if the role the person plays becomes destructive then it may affect the group dynamics." (He then turned to one of the managers who he was preparing for the ensuing discussions). "You are feeling inadequate so you are waiting for somebody to pick you up! You are playing the downtrodden but get out of it! You know what you are worth so back yourself up!"

Pursuit and repetition

Hartog and Verburg (1997: p370) state that "The term pursuit refers to the speaker actively pursuing audience reactions or applause by repeating or otherwise stressing the point just made.

This serves to re-emphasise that point," and "repeating a key element in a phrase or a single word several times directs attention to the point the speaker is trying to make."

Robbins M. Jackson explaining the difficulties that shareholders had gone though in building the business up "We have lost a lot of money, we took a hell of a pounding, and we took a bath!"

Combination

One of the most effective ways of eliciting responses from audiences is by combining several rhetorical devises.

Sharkira Hawk. "I will oppose it vehemently because once you give guys a directorship title you can't take it away because it affects image, stature, motivation etc. I mean why call a doctor a health-worker or why call a director a senior manager? We are working with people and we must always bear that in mind. For the cost of a few bob, now I have to tell my fellow director that he is now a senior manager. It is also useful for marketing as well to say to a customer, 'Have you seen my Managing Director instead of my Manager?'"

Robbins M. Jackson on seeking buy-in for black empowerment transaction, he firstly discussed the environment and country changes and the need to alleviate white subconscious fears of black empowerment, then he went on to provide some statistics, while reinforcing the opportunity that presented itself. " Worldwide unemployment on average is 30 %, yet South African whites unemployment is only 4.7 %. We have never had it so good. Empowerment is not a threat, but an opportunity. The markets are growing as the black population that makes up 93 % of the population (and increasing) and whites make up 7 % and decreasing. If we want to be part of this market we need to be empowered, we need an empowerment partner much more than any empowerment partner needs us. At braais, many start spinning negatives because that stimulates debate and many people are easily destructively critical and look for reasons why things fail and then they go out and create the failure. Fear of the unknown is crazy: the unknown represents unique challenges and opportunities to be embraced."

The Magic Language Box is the researcher's metaphor for the effective, magical, use of language to achieve results. The above parallels with discourse analysis confirm that rhetoric also forms an important element of the lived experience of being a strategic leader.

Using language to set frames that govern, modulate, organize, drive, and control meetings knowing fully well that all experience (including decision making) occurs within such frames

Dolphin Structura: (On creating and developing rapport with the new board, while exploring dividend policy, there was a subtle appeal to un-conscious meanings and values). "You need to guide me on dividend policy. I need to get a feel from you …. We (don't know) as we have never been in this position before." And later on negotiating an 8 % increase in budget spend on staff remuneration, his negotiation was based on a presentation on staff stability and reasons thereof as follows: "We always give salary increases in June/ July, while NUMSA negotiates in June and pays in October. We have a low staff turnover of less than 1 %. In 14 years we have lost zero hours due to union activity. Staff policy is centred around good remuneration, recognition, informed staff and never short-changing them. Our staff are dedicated and will work weekends to help customers out as e.g. a workshop manager who drove to Mozambique coast to repair a client car between Saturday noon and Monday 6 am."

This concluded with: "I want to appeal to you to approve the 8 % increase I have built in the budget although on an individual basis it will be performance driven. Our absenteeism is almost zero due to the earning capacity that we have as our guys have doubled their income in the past 18 months. And our guys, though we have the lowest basic salary in the industry, have the greatest earning capacity, selling +/- 400 hours … compared to the industry norm of +/- 300 hours. At the same time, our CSI is not compromised as we motivate staff with incentives and on overview of results of the organisation. We are over-viewing our five year growth potential with a focus on stability, keeping an eye on the scene of our growth, keeping our cost structures low". Later on, negotiating with the board for an increase in rentals on the property that he personally owns, out of which the business trades.

Dolphin Structura demonstrated an ability to set a controlling frame over the discussion by including a very detailed and thorough business justification including his income and expenditure account for the property plus proof that open market sale and leaseback values were higher than the current rentals; signaling the attractive open market values and offers to buy; clear references to the non-performance-linked rentals of prior years; reference to issues of personal investment risk involved. These opening conversational frames ensured that he obtained the decision support he was hoping for.

The Dragon Slaying Declarations (using words to destroy followers' fears and doubts and restoring, rebuilding and instilling hope and courage)

Robbins M. Jackson on encouraging support for a struggling colleague said: "As I always say some vagrants out there, some are down on their luck and some are by choice, you never know when you are down on your luck, so rather help your colleagues when you can."

Dove Patience on setting a positive frame when a new member of staff was late, made no negative put down but encouraged humorous exchanges about been enthusiastic and making a grand entrance.

Robbins M. Jackson: To a manager who was feeling sad and de-motivated about the poor performance of his business unit: "You are feeling inadequate, so you are waiting for somebody to pick you up and it is affecting your performance" and "You are playing the downtrodden but get out of it, as it doesn't serve you".

Dolphin Structura: On acknowledging the turnaround performance of the head of a business unit "The wash bay is now breaking even and it is a sheer joy to watch the manager when he knows he is breaking even and making some money."

The Victory Chants (consistent speaking (evangelising) out of the corporate vision, endlessly, tirelessly and relentlessly)

By mutual agreement with the leaders, and as a matter of confidentiality, examples of their victory chants are not reproduced here. However, it is enough to say that at every opportunity all the leaders spoke in detail about their vision, at length where time permitted and concisely brief where time was limited, but the evangelising never ceased: it was endless, tireless and relentless. To keep up the inspiration and to fuel the magic the chanting of the vision went on and on in varied ways, but always with an underlying theme.

The seven dimensions of The Magic Language Box reveal that the successful strategic leader is one able to communicate using words, physiology, metaphors, and quotes; use appropriate humour to create a light and constructive environment; utilise metaphors to convey meaning of his or her message and assist others in making sense of organisational life; carefully choose words that lead to rapport and consensus; appreciate the deeper, subjective and higher level meaning that underlies the use of language in all its forms and therefore consciously use the same to elaborate, provide and stimulate deeper meaning of issues being discussed; use language to set frames that deliberately govern, modulate, organise, drive and control meetings knowing fully well that all experience (including decision-making) occurs within such frames; use words actively to destroy followers' fears and doubts on one hand and on the other to restore, rebuild and instil hope and courage. Finally the successful strategic leader ought to consistently speak out (evangelise) the corporate vision, endlessly, tirelessly and relentlessly.

5.7 The lived experience of the strategic leader: what effective CEOs do

The diverse and rich material that I absorbed during the course of the study, from books and articles in the literature survey, resources from NLP, numerous personal development trainings I attended, the rich data from the fieldwork – field notes, meta program interviews, internet research on spiders and Disney Magic, became a continually morphing substance of information in my unconscious mind. This thick rich mixture of information seemed to take a life of its own as it synthesised into forms, structures and patterns somewhere deep down within my mind presenting, sometimes on call, and sometimes of its own accord, to the conscious mind answers I

was searching for. Over and over again I placed a demand on my mind, until the answer was presented to the question: "What is the lived experience of the strategic leader?" The answer was that the lived experience of the strategic leaders in the research was about authentic self-expression by mastery of and through the dimensions of the pure leadership spider-web model.

5.7.1 The lived experience of the strategic leader: authentic self-expression through a pure leadership spider-web model

As the study progressed, I developed a gradual sense of the fact that the lived experience of the strategic leader was about authentic self expression through what I have come to call the pure leadership spider-web model.

In setting out to observe strategic leaders in practice, I did not know whether any commonalities would emerge among them, but as the study progressed, in the midst of the divergence of personalities, I began to sense the existence of a convergence around a common core which eventually crystallised into what I have come to call the pure leadership spider-web model.

The pure leadership spider-web model is not all there is to leading an organisation successfully, as each CEO manifested many unique characteristics so different from the other; the pure refers to the fact that any individual can bring who he/ she is to the role and be a successful strategic leader if he/ she expresses his/ her individuality by mastery of and through the common dimensions referred to as the pure leadership spider-web model.

This thinking is captured in the key realisation that each of the leaders was always true to himself. They led according to their own values. The term authentic self-expression gradually took firm hold in my consciousness, as over and over again every CEO referred to personal values and being true to one's values and beliefs. There was congruence between the two concepts and putting them together, a definition of what the lived experience of the strategic leader is came to the fore: self expression through and around a pure leadership spider-web model.

If self-expression is being true to one's values and beliefs, which differ from one person to the next, what then is a pure leadership spider-web model? In the divergence of personalities there was a convergence of what could be called common best practices of the strategic leaders, the sum of which I call the pure leadership spider-web model.

5.7.1.1 Understanding the word pure in the pure leadership spider-web model

The word pure has its source in that what forms the pure leadership spider-web model are only those patterns that consistently emerged as common among all the leaders. As I have argued, by way of authentic self-expression anyone, has the potential to be an effective leader. In this case effectiveness being measured according to the financial measurements used here provided that they adopt the common emergent patterns (pure) that the study identified. This explains the source of the word pure but why a spider-web?

5.7.1.2 Understanding the metaphor – the spider-web model

I recall as the months unfolded during fieldwork and the thick description began to arise, how I began to realise gradually that what the leaders were doing was similar to cocooning their organisations in an invisible web constructed out of the their behaviours, sayings and actions. The thought and sense of a web stayed with me for a long time until one day as I synthesised and summarised my finding into eight distinct dimensions I began to think of a spider, its eight legs and the web it constructs. The eight dimensions of pure leadership are:

1. the common pillars that make up the personal leadership philosophy
2. the emotional states they display in any situation
3. the kinaesthetic patterns (physical composure) in given situations;
4. how they control and influence meeting dynamics;
5. emotional states they display when walking around the business;
6. emotional states they manifest or use when engaging with other business leaders;
7. how the leaders think - (the frames of mind that govern day- to-day experiences:- source being the meta-program interviews where all five leaders had very similar responses); and
8. how they use language (The Magic Language Box)

It may appear very simplistic, but that is how the metaphor the spider-web model came about, eight themes, eight legs on a spider, the spider makes a web and the strategic leaders seem to construct a web of influence around their businesses.

5.7.1.3 Parallels between a spider's construction of the web and the lived experience of the strategic leader (16 propositions)

While the eight dimensions that emerged from the analysis of the data sparked the metaphor, the research and my own refinement thereof identified 16 steps in the spider's construction of the web (Zschokke, 1993) that provide interesting parallels to the lived experience of the strategic leader. Below in bold, are the 16 steps in the construction process while the italics are the analogies I draw to the lived experience of the strategic leaders.

I construct these as propositions:

1. As a first step, the spider bridges the open space between the two sticks. In this example built in the laboratory (where there is no wind) this is achieved by attaching the dragline at the top of a stick and then walking the detour along the bottom of the supporting structure (A). Outside, bridging a gap is usually achieved by letting a thread float with the wind, and by walking across the gap along this thread. When the spider has reached the other side, it climbs up, often only partly, to a point where it tightens and attaches the dragline to use it to cross back to the top of the other stick.

    Proposition 1: Strategic leaders consciously build or envelope their organisation with their leadership philosophy.

2. During these early steps of web construction, the spider may pause at any time, be it for a few minutes, or for several hours.

    Proposition 2: The extending of the personal philosophy across the organisation is a process that demands conscious self-pacing from the strategic leader.

3. This is a slightly simplified account of a web construction selected for its simplicity; early stages (i.e. the ones above) are highly variable and usually more complicated (cf. Zschokke 1996), the later stages, shown below, are always quite predictable.

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Proposition 3: Irrespective of how complex, varied and difficult a person's background, anyone can develop to be an effective strategic leader.

4. The spider now establishes the so-called proto-hub, a structure where several threads (the proto-radii) fastened to the supporting structure come together in a single point.

   Proposition 4: Everything the strategic leader builds into the organisation has a referent point to a central core of predetermined values.

5. When the spider has established this proto-hub (usually with 3-7 proto-radii) it will proceed by building the first frame thread at the top of the future web (also called bridge thread), followed by moving the proto-hub into its final position, turning it into the hub.

   Proposition 5: Whatever the central core of values is, over time it becomes the core organising principle for the business, out of which everything flows.

6. When the spider builds a simple radius, it walks out along an existing radius to the frame, then downwards (always!) a bit along the frame where it attaches the dragline.

   Proposition 6: The strategic leader first develops internal personal strength and then utilising the top down approach cascades the principles throughout the organisation.

7. The spider then goes back to the hub, reeling up the new dragline and simultaneously producing the definitive radius.

   Proposition 7: The strategic leader always makes consistent reference to the core organising values of the organisation in every new sphere of operation.

8. The next phase in the web-building is the construction of the frame and the radii. The order of the construction of the radii follows certain patterns.

   Proposition 8: Once the core organising values are determined consistency and alignment to the same becomes the modus operandi of all organisational activities.

9. The spider always puts in the new radius immediately below an existing one; never above and never with a large gap where it would later on add another radius.

   Proposition 9: Hierarchical order is a key determinant of all organisational structures and processes that the strategic leader develops.

10. Additionally, it adds the radii in an order apparently to balance the forces in the hub.

> **Proposition 10:** The strategic leader is always fully aware of the dynamics of the organisation, playing a key balancing role in diffusing tension, encouraging the down-hearted and consciously seeking to maintain a well balanced team.

11. When the spider builds the radii, it keeps circling the hub to find a gap in which to place the next radius. This circling then continues after the insertion of the last radius, thus forming the hub structure.

    Proposition 11: The strategic leader deliberately seeks to build a robust organisation, 'circling the hub' looking for gaps and weak areas that need fixing and closing up.

12. The circling of the hub changes without interruption into the construction of the so called auxiliary (or temporary) spiral. This spiral is widely meshed and serves later as scaffolding and guiding structure for the construction of the sticky (or capture) spiral (Zschokke 1993).

    > **Proposition 12:** The strategic leader's personal philosophy permeates the core of the whole organisation and becomes the guiding principle of the activities therein.

13. When the spider has finished the auxiliary spiral it rests for about one minute. It is thought that this rest is required to switch silk production from the tough, non-sticky silk, which the spider has used for all parts of the web so far, to the sticky, much more elastic silk used for the sticky spiral. After this short break, the spider turns around and starts with the construction of the sticky spiral. During the construction of the sticky spiral - especially along the outer edge of the web - the spider quite often turns around. This results in so called U-turns (also named reverses or switch-backs) in the sticky spiral. It seems that this is done to fill the available space optimally.

    > **Proposition 13:** Strategic leaders consistently invest time in building strong interfaces between the internal organisation and the external environment, strengthening and saturating the organisational boundaries with their personal philosophy and core values.

14. When the spider has finished the sticky spiral, it bites out and eats the centre of the hub (together with the remains from the construction of the radii, see above) and replaces it with a few threads. The spider then remains motionless in the centre of the web and waits for prey to fly into it.

Proposition 14: Strategic leaders operate from a position of rest and create time for self-reflection and introspection, while the organisations performs its functions around them.

15. The spider usually replaces the web every night, or every other night. When it stays at the same place it reuses large parts of the anchor and frame threads, but it replaces all radii and the sticky spiral. The old web is ingested and recycled into new silk.

Proposition 15: The strategic leader continues to refine herself or himself as well as refresh his or her leadership philosophy on a regular basis thus ensuring that the organisation's culture never stagnates or fragments from lack of renewal.

16. The time it takes the spider to get started with web construction varies enormously, but once it really gets going, it takes the spider about one hour to complete the web.

Proposition 16: Self-drive, goal-orientation, ambition are key determinants of success as a strategic leader.

So the strategic leader spins a web around the organisation using the eight dimensions of the pure leadership spider-web model.

5.8 The pure leadership spider-web model.

If the what of the lived experience of the strategic leader is authentic self- expression through the eight dimensions of the pure leadership spider-web model, then the analysis of the characteristics of each dimension reveals how the strategic leaders do so and also how they think about the same. The analysis of the characteristics of each dimension is shown in the table that follows.

TABLE 2: The spider-web model

spider-web dimensions	Key characteristics of each dimension
The common pillars that make up the personal leadership philosophy	Strategic leaders choose to stay the course (longevity) in an industry); they practice day-by-day intuitive 'gut-feel' leadership with personal involvement in the operational side of the business; they exhibit a determined expression of the true/ self; they responsibly empower their direct reports; they have a passion for people and developing a deep understanding of people; they implement performance driven management and remuneration systems; they have a thoroughly detailed focus on business processes; they implement measurements and metrics to aid in business management; they appreciate the need for high energy levels; they have a strong belief in relentless formal and informal communication across the board; they persistently and relentlessly ensure a prioritised focus on customers, both internal and external.
emotional states they display in any situation	Strategic leaders seek to always bring to any situation humour, logic, envisioning, detailing, calmness, persuasiveness, empathy, and self expression through strong personal values.
Kinaesthetic Patterns	Strategic leaders always maintain a cool and calm posture (computer mode) and seek to be always factual and congruent (leveller mode).

spider-web dimensions	Key characteristics of each dimension
How they control and influence meeting dynamics	Strategic leaders exhibit high intense and focused levels of personal energy, and the ability to create a warm corporate family 'temperature' in the workplace

emotional states they display when walking around the business	When walking around the business strategic leaders bring to bear humour, logic, talking the vision, detailing, calmness, persuasiveness and determined will to succeed, empathy, a focus on each individual, customer- focused orientation, encouragement and uplifting of staff.
emotional states they manifest or use when engaging with other business leaders	When engaging with other strategic leaders they bring to bear humour, inquisitiveness, expanding their vision, detailing, calmness, rising to meet the challenge to improve their own business, humility, respect for differing points of view, and deep ability to listen.
How the leaders think (frames of mind governing the day to day experiences :- source being the meta-program interviews where all five leaders had very similar responses)	A strategic leader's common thinking patterns include boldness, being harmonious and integrated, being pro-active and stable, an aggressive response to 'stressors'; active thinking, perceptual thinking, optimising, possibility orientation, a toward motivational strategy, ability to access memories randomly, a best case scenario/ optimistic and empowered approach to life, an ability to self-reflect , intuition-driven on need, seeing things on a continuum as opposed to black and white absolutes, a process non static orientation to life, and a congruent alignment to own personal values.

spider-web dimensions	Key characteristics of each dimension
How they use language (The Magic Language Box)	Strategic leaders carefully choose words that deliver a strong message in a subtle manner that minimizes friction and resistance at the conscious level; they allow a conscious morphing of words, bodily gestures, metaphors to deliver a message that creates the desired meaning in listeners; they use words to build up and encourage in all situations (the good and the bad); they use language to control discussion and end up with group consensus in line with own goals; they use metaphors and stories to deliver powerful messages; they use the power of language to set the frames that govern any meeting (individual or group) knowing fully well that all experience occurs within a governing frame and that these frames govern, modulate, organize, drive and control the experiences that occur within a given context; they appreciate the magic of meaning that underlies each word and knowing that there are higher level meanings that can be attributed to spoken words; preferring using language (words, gestures, metaphors) as opposed to one-dimensional electronic or hard copy correspondence; they activate at will Mickey's Dragon Slaying Incantations (in other words, they use words to destroy followers' fears and doubts about victory in the marketplace); and they also activate Mickey's Victory Chants (in other words they consistently speak out the corporate vision, endlessly, tirelessly, relentlessly).

5.9 Summary

This chapter presented the results of the fieldwork in terms of the three levels of data collection. The analysis resulted in identifying the role of a personal leadership philosophy as the starting point of becoming an effective strategic leader. The analysis further identified the role of emotional state management as well as the types of emotional states that effective strategic leaders engage and bring to bear in different situations, including in staff meetings, when meeting with other leaders and also when walking around the business. Further to this kinaesthetic patterns that effective strategic leaders use in these situations were also identified. The analysis also identified, utilising NLP meta-program structures, how successful strategic leaders think and what frames of mind govern their daily experiences. The analysis also identified the powerful role of language as the tool for creating the sense of magic and an environment where everything seems possible within the organisation. Mastery of language, in all its forms and structure, was also identified as an essential ingredient in becoming an effective strategic leader. The analysis and synthesis of all the results led to the development of the pure leadership spider-web model.

The strategic leader, therefore, starting from a crystallised personal leadership philosophy, and having mastered emotional state and kinaesthetic pattern management utilises language, in all its forms and structures, to engage the organisation, weave and spin a web and create a magical environment where his goals and those of the organisation can be achieved.

Finally the strong and significant parallel between the lived experience of the strategic leader, as depicted in the eight dimensions of the pure leadership spider-web model, and how a spider constructs a web, in 16 distinct steps, led to the development of the 16 key propositions of this study.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF THE STRATEGIC LEADER

6.1 Prising open the black box

With any airplane crash investigation, there are always many unanswered questions as to what brought the plane down. Investigators turn to the airplane's flight data recorder (FDR) and cockpit voice recorder (CVR), also known as black boxes, (Bonsor, 2005) for accurate answers.

This research identified as the black box of the study and understanding of strategic leadership the lived experience of the strategic leader. The researcher over the course of a period lasting 755 hours, of which 451 hours were spent in complete observation, of 138 discrete critical incidents, 120 hours were spent in transcribing the video tapes and 184 hours of travel time was logged, prized open this black box. The 138 discrete critical incidents observed were of what was happening of significance inside the black box. The 451 hours of complete observation took place until a thick description of raw observational data was reached and the researcher sensed that no new insights would be gained by further observations. The subsequent analysis of the data revealed the emergence of common themes that eventually formed what the researcher has termed the pure leadership spider-web model. This model has eight distinct dimensions, hence the analogy to a spider with its eight legs.

The research sought to study the lived experience of strategic leaders, how they do what they do and also how they think about it. The eight dimensions of the pure leadership spider-web model unlock the black box and the metaphorical analogy to the 16 steps of spider-web construction demonstrate the how to apply the spider-web model in an organisation. An analysis of this model reveals that what the strategic leaders essentially do is, while being true to themselves or authentic, consciously use the eight dimensions of the pure leadership spider-web model to spin a magical web around their organisation creating an environment where everything is possible to conceive, do and achieve. It was identified that the starting point of success was in formulating a personal leadership philosophy and that mastery of and use of language in all its forms, content, composition or structure, the communication style (including the emotional aspects thereof),

physiology and voice tonality were all a key part of the model. The model also reveals the fact that effective strategic leaders have common ways of thinking about what they do.

In analysing the data, the researcher developed the "pure" part of the pure leadership spider-web model after realising that, each and everyone, of the strategic leaders was unique and always true to their authentic self. In no ways did the researcher observe any efforts or attempts to be like someone different. The strategic leaders in this research spoke of being true to their own values, being authentic, during the discussions termed leadership philosophy, and they were observed to be true to these same values during the actual observation of the lived experience of the strategic leader. This research, therefore, suggests that anyone can be an effective strategic leader provided they do and apply certain things within their organisations as suggested in the pure leadership spider-web model and in a certain way as demonstrated, metaphorically, in parallel with the 16 steps of spider-web construction.

The one common characteristic that the leaders talked about and exhibited was their articulation of, and a strong adherence to, clearly defined personal values and a personally defined leadership philosophy. They also had an almost unbelievable positive way of thinking, not the type of intangible pie-in-the sky positive thinking that some motivational gurus make much of but rather a grounded positive thinking and way of speaking that left one eager to face the challenges that lay ahead; they themselves typically exhibited an eager go and get outlook to life. They were also able to manage their emotional states consistently while at the same time being able to take control of the emotional state of the groups or individuals they addressed. This they did by a conscious use of their own physiology, humour, stories and metaphors to deliver what could be difficult and tough decisions while at the same time relying strongly on logic, reason and facts to change perceptions.

The strategic leaders were also noticed to operate out of certain thinking paradigms which included for example boldness, self-reflection, a process non-static orientation to life, a steering away from black and white absolute frames of reference, a best-case scenario and optimising

view of life as well as an empowered view to life's challenges. The leaders all had an ability to use language to create positive inspirational effects that reminded one of the captivating powers of a magician. The leaders left one feeling motivated and invincible, able to tackle any challenge the business presented. It was observed that language use was not just verbal, but also included a conscious exhibition of a calm demeanour, as well a deliberate use of physiology, body language, in particular an ability to maintain open arm inviting postures, that seemed to communicate at an unconscious level, personal availability and openness. When engaged in observation the researcher always had a strong sense of entering a unique but powerful and embracing web constructed out of the application of these unique language skills.

6.2 Parallels with authentic leadership

Goffee and Jones (2005) argued that personal authenticity was an essential ingredient of leadership. Their findings after five years of research are consistent with those of this research and current writings on authentic leadership. Goffee and Jones (2006) argued that leaders do not become great by aspiring to a list of universal character traits. Instead, effective leaders are authentic deploying individual strengths to engage followers' hearts, minds and souls.

This research while confirming authenticity, has also identified common characteristics that the literature review has not identified. This research reveals being authentic as only one of the eight dimensions of the pure leadership spider-web model. Goffee and Jones (2005: p88) argue that "while the expression of an authentic self is necessary for great leadership, the concept of authenticity is often misunderstood, not at least by leaders themselves. They often assume that authenticity is an innate quality – that a person is either authentic or not. In fact, authenticity is a quality that others must attribute to you. No leader can look into a mirror and say, 'I am authentic'. A person cannot be authentic on his or her own. Authenticity is largely defined by what other people see in you and, as such, can to a great extent be controlled by you. If authenticity were purely an innate quality, there would be little you could do to manage more effective as a leader."

The five strategic leaders in this research never declared that they were authentic, this is a term I have ascribed to them. Instead, they spoke of their values, of corporate values, of aligning individual values to those of the corporate and of continually striving to be true to who they were; the result of all this was what I observed as an effortless sense of being at peace with oneself. I observed that they seemed to strike a right balance between authentic self-expression and leading and influencing others thus overcoming the challenge of great leadership, managing personal authenticity (Goffee and Jones, 2005).

Goffee and Jones (2006) extend their argument by stating that authentic leaders are skilful at consistently being themselves, even as they alter their behaviours to respond effectively in changing contexts arguing that leadership always has an overarching goal that the leaders communicate compellingly to their intended followers. The pure leadership spider-web model specifically enables leaders to be themselves while providing a framework of useful behaviours to bring to bear in experiences they are likely to encounter as strategic leaders.

Klenke (2001: 51) stated that "a company's moral health largely depends on the standards and example set by the CEO who models the values the organisation stands for." This research revealed that the strategic leader is primarily true to his or her own values, and uses these to shape the values of the organisation. Longevity, described in the research as the time spent in one organisation, was a key attribute observed among all the five leaders, which allowed them to shape, overtime, the values of the organisation. Many organisations declare their corporate values; Klenke (2001: 51) states that "a visit to many corporate web sites reveals values such as: excellence, innovation, teamwork, constant growth, lifelong learning, spirit of generosity, family, integrity, pre meritocracy, quality, and customer satisfaction." This research revealed that there was strong alignment between three areas: what the leader said his values were, what was observed during the research, and what the organisational values were said to be. The leaders knew their values, lived their values and the organisation reflected those values.

Goffee and Jones (2005) further explain that their research over the preceding five years revealed that great leaders showed four behaviours, all linked to personal authenticity: selective

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weakness, with the occasional vulnerability giving them humanity and approachability; the use of intuition, developed from longevity in an industry, to interpret soft data and to decide when and how to act; management using a tough empathy – caring deeply about the work their employees did; finally capitalising on what makes them different to others i.e., their own unique qualities. They also argued that authentic leaders needed the capacity to role-play in need. The idea of role-play is critical to the findings of this research because while each strategic leader was true to their own values they exhibited an easy ability to engage with people of different value and belief systems. Gareth and Jones (2005) argue that "to attract followers, a leader has to be many things to many people. The trick is to pull that off while remaining true to yourself."

Being authentic is a deliberate and well thought through process of determining one's values and leadership philosophy and choosing to express this at all times, without fear or self-doubt. This research as well as the personal leadership philosophy does not say what values one should lead by rather it argues for clarity of personal values and choosing to live and lead by them. Marshall and Heffes (2004) argue that authentic leadership is about being a unique individual, responsibility, personal leadership development, understanding one's weaknesses and acting to turn them to strengths. George (2003) argues that authentic leaders are purpose driven, value orientated, have the ability to engage with employees' hearts, results orientated, self-disciplined and have the ability to build long lasting relationships. These personal leadership dimensions were observed to be true with all the five strategic leaders in this research.

6.3 Leaders as story-tellers

Goffee and Jones (2005) concluded that ultimately effective leaders are great storytellers who can shape events into vision, signalling where the organisational challenges lie. This agrees with one of the findings of this research that effective strategic leaders consciously utilise stories, metaphors and humour to shape their organisations. This ability to tell stories is a key component of what the researcher has termed The Magic Language Box; the skilled use of language is a distinction among effective strategic leaders. Harris and Barnes (2005) argue that story-telling is the most effective way to engage staff in an organisation, as stories allow people to relate to

personal experiences and to overcome communication barriers that may arise if routine conversations are used.

The author developed the term The Magic Language Box after experiencing the story of the Disney magical characters during a holiday break with his son. What sparked the link to the research and the realisation that what leaders did was create magic using language was the effectiveness of Disney's storytelling to communicate powerful messages in a magical manner. Harris and Barnes (2005) state that stories are tools of leadership, and that stories, allegories, and metaphors are powerful tools for communicating complex concepts in unforgettable ways.

The research revealed the use of language to engage staff, motivate, and inspire as one of the leadership tools at the disposal of effective strategic leaders. The term The Magic Language Box was utilised to capture the magical essence of this ability to use language, as well the apparent magic spell cast on followers. Hartog and Verburg (1997: p51) state that "CEOs play an important part in creating and dispersing organisational values and visions to organisation members and the external environment. Their speeches within and outside the company are important to motivate others and gain support for their vision," and that "other elements contributing to the strong motivational and emotive effects of charismatic rhetoric are construction of the message, style and delivery."

Rhetoric, the use of carefully constructed language, this researcher therefore argues, is a leadership tool that effective strategic leaders have at their disposal. This research found that language is composed of several dimensions including the use of metaphors, stories, the way the speaker conveys the message, that is the tone and attitude, as well as the way the actual message is delivered; over and over again the researcher observed the leaders making use of open, expressive gestures, direct eye contact, and tonality in the delivery.

Hartog and Verburg (1997: p361) describe similar elements of rhetoric as content (what the speech is all about); composition (how the message is framed through the use of metaphors, or other rhetorical devices); communicator style (the way in which one communicates e.g., friendly

or dominant), and delivery (the actual delivery of the speech including non-verbal aspects, such as facial expressions, eye-contact, gestures, tone of voice).

6.4 Parallels with discourse analysis

This research's findings enshrined in the pure leadership spider-web model have strong parallels with research findings of discourse analysis. Hartog and Verburg (1997: 365) state that "discourse analysis focuses on all forms of talk and texts as social practices – whether they are naturally occurring in conversations, interviews, speeches or written texts – and on the resources that are drawn on to enable those practices (Potter, 1996)."

Potter and Wetherell (1987, 1994) identify three features of discourse analysis. First, regarding talk and text as social practises implies rejecting the idea that language is a neutral means of describing the world (Gill, 1996). Even a simple phenomenon can be described in many ways, depending on the orientation of the speaker (Potter, 1996). Second, discourse is concerned with action, construction and variability of language. "People perform actions of different kinds through their talk and their writing, and they accomplish the nature of these actions partly through constructing their discourse out of a range of styles, linguistic resources and rhetorical devices" (Potter and Wetherell, 1994, p. 48).

Different actions (e.g., blaming, justifying, persuading) can be performed through language, which makes variation in the description of phenomena significant. Discourse analysis focuses on the constructive process of language, which implies attention to the content as well as the organisation of talk and texts. Third, discourse analysis is concerned with the rhetorical (argumentative) organisation of talk and thought and the use of the same to provide answers to social or sociological questions.

Hartog and Verburg (1997) further point out that discourse analysis integrates some ideas from conversation analysis and also that effective discourse analysis depends on the question the researcher asks. In this research the question that formed the basis of the research was what do effective CEOs do, how do they do it and an exploration into how they think about it?

One of the key findings of this research was how strategic leaders used the meaning making power of language to convey their messages to the people they engaged with. This is consistent with what Alvesson and Karreman (2000) argued that a certain level of meaning is to be found in every language.

The research objective, in order to answer the question, was to study the lived experience of the strategic leader. The results of this study, of the black box of leadership, provided a thick description of raw data that enables discourse analysis using accepted discourse analysis devices. It also, perhaps, suggests that the lived experience of being a strategic leader is expressed as a social practice through discourse.

6.4.1 Rhetorical devices that strategic leaders use

Hartog and Verburg (1997: p367) state that "Atkinson (1984) suggests that a restricted class of rhetorical devices is consistently effective in evoking positive reactions from the audience, that mastery of the use of these devices is a characteristic skill of charismatic speakers, and that such devices are prevalent in passages from speeches selected for quotation or presentation in the news media."

The devices described by Atkinson (1984) and Heritage and Greatbach (1986) are: contrast, list (especially three-part lists), puzzle-solution/ headline – punch line, position taking, pursuit, repetition, and alliteration." While this research was not focused on the speeches of strategic leaders nor the observations of speech making or speech delivery during the normal conversations that took place in the organisation, during the observations, some of the rhetorical devices were observed in use.

6.5 Physical and mental renewal of leaders

Boyatzis and McKee (2005) in their well researched work on how leaders can create and sustain resonance across the organisation by a process of physical, mental and emotional renewal, found

that personal renewal relies on elements that ensure leaders sustain resonance within and also with others.

One element is mindfulness, or living in a state of full, conscious awareness of one's whole self, other people, and the context in which we live and work. In effect, mindfulness means being awake, aware, and attending, hopeful, enables us to believe that the future we envision is attainable, and to move toward our visions and goals while inspiring others toward those goals as well, while another critical element is compassion. Compassion is where a leader understands people's wants and needs and feels motivated to act on those feelings. The results of the current research, which sees strong parallels between these elements of renewal and the lived experience of the strategic leaders, equate mindfulness to the ability to keep the organisation focused and inspired to attain a desired future end while at the same time being compassionate to people's needs in the present..

6.6 Leaders inspire hope and belief

The element of hope and the belief that the future envisioned was attainable was also spoken about during the personal leadership philosophy discussions and also noticed during the observations; in fact one of the most outstanding use of language, enshrined in what the researcher terms The Magic Language Box, was the leader's ability to articulate the corporate vision, as well as to inspire the listeners to aspire to it.

Furthermore, when business results were not good, or challenges loomed, or managers were de-motivated for whatever reason, the leaders were able by the use of language to inspire hope for the future, and to raise the dejected spirit. The element of compassion, was seen in how the leaders highly value and are committed to understanding people's wants, needs and feelings and how they choose to act on their feelings in this regard. The leaders observed in the research saw no problem in cancelling pre-arranged meetings to attend a colleague's funeral, nor would they spare money to provide staff with adequate time-off work, counselling facilities and support in times of need.

6.7 The leader as servant

This researcher, while focussing on the strategic leader, has not found strong parallels with populist heroic leadership traits, the man on the white horse syndrome; indeed the leaders in the sample are strong individuals, who while demonstrating the ability to bring their personal influence to bear on the organisations, the spider web metaphor best explains this, were seen to be conscious of the need to work through people, to responsibly empower their direct reports, and to develop long term succession plans. These leaders were also seen to be consciously aware of the needs of the individuals in their organisations, this consciousness has trait parallels to being a servant leader as defined by Greenleaf (1977). This study did not, however, set out to test for servant leadership and save for the above no other parallels can be drawn to servant leadership from the results of the research.

In this research the five strategic leaders were observed to be continually seeking to serve others as evidenced particularly by their efforts to create organisational climates that helped people grow.

6.8 Parallels with the Leaderplex Model

Hooijberg, Hunt and Dodge (1997) argued that most researchers have never integrated in one research the cognitive, social, and behavioural aspects of leadership. Such an integration would enhance the understanding of leadership. Their Leaderplex Model is an integrative framework that not only takes into account these three aspects but also factors in the many other dynamic factors that leaders deal with on a regular basis: multiple and varied stakeholders; dynamic environments both internal and external to the organisation as well as issues of effectiveness across all these varied situations.

The methodology adopted in this research, the observing of critical incidents, has been a good basis for considering the three aspects of leadership they make reference to; cognitive, social and behavioural. In addition, the range of critical incidents observed meet the need for a holistic approach to the research of strategic leaders; an approach that covers the variety of stakeholders

the leaders interacted with. The Leaderplex Model integrates the cognitive, behavioural, and social elements while this research's pure leadership spider-web model which answers the 'what', and 'how' of the lived experience being a strategic leader is a similarly integrated model.

6.9 Parallels to the leadership pipeline

In analysing diairies and utilisation of executive time it was observed that two of the five strategic leaders spent three times as much time as the average of the rest on mentoring. The type of mentoring involved here was observed however to be more to do with assisting the subordinate perform a better job in the present as opposed to leadership development with succession planning in mind. In this research a focus on leadership development and succession planning, as evidenced by the use of structured processes, was not observed.

Charan, Drotter, Noel (2001) proffered a leadership development model that identified six leadership passages or major events that require a major shift in skills, time applications and values as one progresses up the corporate ladder; these six events being:

     i.   from managing oneself to managing others;

     ii.   from managing others to managing managers;

     iii.   from managing managers to functional manager

     iv.   from functional manager to business manager

     v.   from business manager to group manager

     vi.   from group manager to enterprise manager

These six events demonstrate the complex process of becoming an effective leader. Of significance to the current research is the first major event, which has parallels to the personal leadership philosophy, and the last major event, the transition to becoming an enterprise manager. This research has shown that each of the strategic leaders had a strong ability to manage oneself which was their basis for their abilities to manage others. The enterprise manager is the strategic leader, the CEO, of the organisation. There are some parallels between what Charan et al (2001) argue to be the key factors about the transition to this level and the

findings of this research. (I indicate in brackets and italics in the following section, whether parallels exist or not from the findings of this research) which are:

i. more about values than skills and moving beyond being strategic thinkers to being visionary thinkers while at the same time delivering on and driving quarter-by-quarter performance (*visionary thinking was demonstrated by all the strategic leaders while at the same time the focus on short-term financial performance was always a priority*)

ii. having an outward-looking perspective demonstrated as the ability to manage external stakeholders, to sense significant external shifts and to proactively deal with them (*all the strategic leaders demonstrated the ability to sense significant shifts such as the national drive for Black Economic Empowerment and to respond proactively to this*)

iii. the ability to determine the three or four mission critical priorities to focus on in a given year (*all the strategic leaders demonstrated the ability to prioritise their focus areas, the findings of the current research did not indicate a narrowing down to three or four priorities in a given year*)

iv. the ability to think holistically about the organisation instead of in terms of individual businesses, products or customers (*this ability was generally to exist among all strategic leaders*).

v. The need to identify, assemble a team of high-achieving and ambitious direct reports (*the researcher did not get the sense that all the direct reports of the strategic leaders were ambitious – certainly they appeared competent in all respects – hard driving ambition was only observed in a handful of direct reports*).

vi. A successful transition is preceded by a combination of two processes
a. selected job assignments that stretch people over time (*this was not evident from the findings of the research save in the case of two of the CEO's who had held different jobs that had significant stretch within them over the course of their careers*)

b. the process of time, experience and the right assignments (the findings clearly demonstrate that time and experience had played a critical and significant role in the development of the CEOs as strategic leaders).

The lessons from the leadership pipeline could be incorporated into the findings of this research to develop an effective and practical leadership model.

6.10 Putting leaders on the couch

Kets de Vries (2004), from three decades of academic research and experience as a practicing psychoanalyst, shared insights to what goes on inside the mind of the successful CEO and proposed a prescription for healthy leadership (p 66) "self-awareness and a well-rounded personal life, as well as an ability to suffer fools and laugh at yourself." Kets de Vries further argued that the presence of emotional intelligence, the self-reflexiveness of the CEO, was a primary indicator of success.

In this research all the strategic leaders demonstrated the presence of emotional intelligence. Analysis of the conversations held with each leader revealed that they made time to retreat into their own private space, whether it was taking time to sit on a bench at the farm and reflect and recharge, read a book on holiday or attend personal development courses and retreats.

The analysis of diaries revealed that all the strategic leaders made time for personal reflection and planning with the lowest allocation being 11 % of all time available. While Kets de Vries (2004) argued that many successful male leaders were significantly influenced in their upbringing by very strong, supportive mothers, this research did not extend into the personal lives of the strategic leaders so it is not possible to draw conclusions about how well-rounded their personal lives are or whether their personal backgrounds have any bearing on their current successes.

Kets de Vries (2004) does raise several factors that demonstrate that a leader is healthy. The following have strong parallels and correlation to the findings of this current research:
i. a great passion for what they do
ii. a strong belief in the ability to influence the course of their lives

iii.   personal responsibility when things go wrong in their lives

iv.   the ability to self-observe, self-reflect and self-analyse

v.   the ability to face the disappointments of life, engage with them and then move on

The findings of this research that show how strategic leaders think, the meta-programs, have the strongest parallels to Kets de Vries (2004) arguments. This research has shown that, among other common thinking patterns, strategic leaders think pro-actively, have the ability to self-reflect, are possibility orientated, have an empowered and toward motivational approach to life enabling them to face and deal with any challenge that arises.

6.11 Beyond the concept of people leadership

In section 1.3 it was pointed out that Abell (2006) had argued that a look into the future would lead to a new definition of leadership that would stretch beyond the concept of people leadership. The results of this study suggest that his future projection was solid and valid as leadership, at least leadership of organisations, seems to place a significant emphasis on individual mastery as it relates to the development of the personal leadership philosophy as well as the use of language in all its forms and structure. The ability to inspire action using language is suggested as a key ability of being a strategic leader. The need to know how to use language to create a sense of magic and limitless possibilities in and around organisations has also been suggested as a key part of being a strategic leader.

6.12 The importance of the role of the strategic leader

Upper Echelons Theory (Hambrick and Mason, 1984) has argued for the importance and significance of the top management team as a key determinant of organisational performance. On the other hand succession studies have indicated instead that the CEO, the strategic leader, has a direct and significant effect on company performance (Day and Lord, 1988). This research was based on five strategic leaders, who had been identified as being effective where effectiveness was determined by a set of 18 financial metrics. The analysis of the results has confirmed what Day and Lord (1988) argued for and that is while the TMT's leadership is a consequential determinant of organisational performance it is the strategic leader who has a

direct and significant effect on performance. While the TMTs across the five organisations were competent at no stage in the study did any of the strategic leaders defer ultimate decision making to the team; each strategic leader spoke of being ultimately personally accountable for the organisation's performance and also acted in the manner that supported this view. The role of the strategic leader has been seen as completely distinct from that of the TMT in complete contrast to views of some researchers who have that the two roles are equivalent and that the definition of the CEO had to stretch to encompass the TMT (Gordon and Yukl, 2004; Zacarro and Klimoski, 2001). Having argued for the distinct and significant role of the strategic leader this research has still shown that the CEO doesn't work in isolation and that a competent TMT is a great aid to his effectiveness.

The findings of this research do not disagree with the proposition that leadership exists at all levels of the organisation (Gordon and Yukl, 2004) but they suggest that the leadership of an organisation is concentrated in one individual, the strategic leader, and is not distributed over a broad base of individuals. This finding provides new insight into the understanding of the difference between leadership and leadership of organisations (Davies and Davies 2004).

6.13 Summary

Overall the results in Chapter 5 resonate with other leadership research albeit most of the latter is not specific to the leadership of organisations, strategic leadership, by one strategic leader.

This discussion has confirmed the finding of the research that the lived experience of the strategic leader, as embodied in the pure leadership spider-web model, extends beyond people leadership (Abell, 2006), and that it is about the mastery of self, the dimension called the personal leadership philosophy; mastery of language in all its forms, the dimension called The Magic Language Box; the mastery of physiology as a communication tool; mastery of effective thinking patterns, meta-programs and the ability to synergistically use these three fundamental skills to create an environment of possibility within an organisation that would be evidenced by the emotional and mental states created in any situation.

The need for a clear personal leadership philosophy has been argued for both by the results of this research and also by parallels drawn to authentic leadership (Goffe and Jones, 2005). It seems clear that although organisational values play a fundamental role in the sustainability of an organisation and also that they maybe determined in a variety of ways it is the strategic leader that has the personal ability to ensures that the organisation lives them. In order to do this research has found that the strategic leader needs to be clear about his own values and choose to live by them. To be able to choose one's own values and to be disciplined enough to live by them is one of the key events or passages identified in the leadership pipeline by Charan, Drotter, Noel (2001).

Language has also been argued as the medium, not just for effective and meaningful communication (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Hartog and Verburg, 1997), but for galvanising the whole organisation to action towards an inspiring future (Goffee and Jones, 2005) and more importantly as the tool the strategic leader has to create an environment of possibility for every employee.

This research has also found that strategic leaders have a common way of thinking, as evidenced by the thinking patterns of the common meta-programs. Within the common thinking patterns it was found that the ability to renew mentally and to maintain a possibility orientated and positive outlook to life were critical to being effective; these results parallel results from other research (Kets de Vries, 2004; Boyatzis and McKee, 2005)

The 16 steps of spider-web construction, out of which the research's propositions were generated, have been presented as a metaphor for the 'how to' implement the pure leadership spider-web model within organisations. The pure leadership spider-web model integrates the 'what' and 'how' of the lived experience of the strategic leader as well as 'how' strategic leaders think just as the Leaderplex Model (Hooijberg, Hunt and Dodge, 1997) integrates the cognitive, behavioural and social elements of leadership.

The results also provide new insight into the debate between the roles of the CEO, the strategic leader, and top management teams (TMTs). Each of the strategic leaders observed had a strong TMT around him, and he continually invested in his direct reports' training and development either by coaching or by enrolling them on external programs. Each strategic leader, however, was always observed to talk about been ultimately personally accountable for the present and future state of the organisation; not in any situation was this responsibility ever seen as distributed among the top management team. In meetings of a strategic nature, it was always observed that open and thorough debate on possible directions was always encouraged among the TMT but the final decision on the course to be taken was always that of one person, the strategic leader. This finding echoes what Day and Lord (1988) argued as the difference between the role of the TMT versus that of the strategic leader.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Significance and contribution of the research

The significance and contribution of the research centred on it being primarily focused on the strategic leader and what that strategic leader actually does in practice.

Due to the prevalence of the romanticised and heroic CEO phenomenon, a need was identified to study the behaviours of the individual strategic leader empirically to see what actually happens in practice. Leadership researchers, acknowledged the need for an in-depth understanding of what CEOs do as well as the need for practical, useful and applicable scientific knowledge (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003).

It is evident from literature review that for a long time people have been seeking a better understanding of the experience of being a strategic leader. This research sought to add to the knowledge of the practice of CEO leadership by studying what actually happens, the lived experience of executive leadership. This was achieved by prising open what was termed the black box of leadership. One now has an insight into the actual lived experience of being a strategic leader demonstrating the reality of what actually happens in practice.

The lived experience of strategic leadership was found to be about a strategic leader being true to himself or herself, authentic, while having the skill, and the leadership tool, of being able to use language in all its forms to affect the emotions in individual and group dynamics, and to convey desired messages to the audience.

At the same time, it was found that strategic leaders, again by the skilful use of language, spin a web and cocoon their organisations in the ways that they consciously choose, with the result that at the end of the day the very nature, essence, being or character of the organisation reflects their own strongly held beliefs.

The pure leadership spider-web model, as proposed, is a framework that anyone aspiring to be a leader can study and gain a sense of how they can become highly effective without losing their individuality.

The skillful use of language cannot be emphasised enough, as the research showed that it has the power to create a magical experience akin to that which Disney creates for their audiences during shows such as Fantasmic, featuring the popular character Mickey Mouse. This show inspired the researcher's deep understanding of language use which he eventually termed The Magic Language Box.

7.2 Answering the research question

The primary research objective was to study the lived experience of the strategic leader and to answer the question:

What do effective CEOs do and how do they do it?

A secondary question was:

How do they think about the same?

The research results have answered these questions by prising open the black box of the lived experience of being a strategic leader and by providing the pure leadership spider-web model.

Effective CEOs, being authentic, true to who they are, masterfully utilise language in all its forms and structure to skilfully and magical spin a web around their organisations that enables them to achieve the results they want with and through the people within and outside the organisation. In doing this they display a positive mastery over their mental and emotional states and continually bring to bear the same on all experiences, interactions and engagements. In so doing, they create magic, a sense of possibility in their organisations. This is the essence of the pure leadership spider-web model, which breaks down the what, how and thinking of the lived experience of being a strategic leader into eight key dimensions.

7.3 General conclusions about strategic leadership

While the research did not seek to generate a theory nor test a hypothesis sixteen specific propositions were offered from the pure leadership spider-web model. However, by way of summary, the following general conclusions about the nature of strategic leadership are offered here:

i. To be an effective strategic leader one has to achieve mastery in utilising the eight dimensions of the pure leadership spider-web model.

ii. Being authentic is a key aspect of being an effective strategic leader.

iii. The mastery of language, in all its forms, is a key aspect of being an effective strategic leader.

iv. Strategic leaders must have a personal leadership philosophy that will be at the core of how they lead and engage others.

v. Strategic leaders display a high level of consciousness of their effect on others.

vi. Becoming an effective strategic leader is a long and complex process akin to the complexity of the 16 steps of constructing a spider-web.

Accepting that the characteristics of the eight dimensions of the pure leadership spider-web model should form the core of any process of becoming an effective strategic leader, an aspiring strategic leader, therefore, has to be authentic, develop and live by a clearly defined personal leadership philosophy , learn to be the master of his or her emotional states of mind, develop the ability to bring any emotional state of mind to bear on any situation, understand and master the physiological forms of language and be able to use this at will, control meeting dynamics with staff and peers using emotional states of mind and the physiological forms of language, become a master at setting and using frames of mind to govern day-to-day experiences, master one's

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thinking patterns, and above all learn to create magic using language in all its forms. Finally the aspirant needs to be patient as the process of becoming an effective strategic leader is a complex time consuming process.

7.4 Limitations of the research and implications thereof

The limitations of the study, which were highlighted in section 1.8, limit the generalisability of the findings to the understanding of the lived experience of the strategic leader outside of the group of strategic leaders represented by the sample chosen. Any future studies seeking to test the generalisability of these findings would need to account for these limitations as a whole or in specific studies.

7.5 Implications and opportunities for future research

While each of the limitations listed in section 1.8 provide, in contrast, an opportunity for future research, here is an elaboration that can provide direction for future researchers:

7.5.1 Different industries, organisational scale, and different geographic regions

Due to the potential difficulties of gaining access to strategic leaders this research was deliberately focused on one industry, the automotive retail sector. Researchers with the ability to access other industries in different geographic locations, which means time and budget would not be constraints, would provide new insights into the nature of lived experience in these situations and possibly answer questions as to whether the type and nature of industry and geographic locations have an impact on the experience of strategic leadership. Ideally, a random cross-sectional design would be optimal. The challenge is getting quality access to strategic leaders with whom one may not be familiar

7.5.2 Time, Budget and Access to leaders

Time and budget are a known constraint in ethnography. Although in this research I reached thick description in the data gathered, an opportunity exists for researchers who do not have time and budget constraints to extend their field time, across industries and geographic locations. Such a spread would possibly necessitate an increase in sample as well, but without time and budget

restrictions this would not pose any problems to the researcher. Unlimited time and budget would be even more beneficial to a researcher who has been granted unlimited access to the strategic leaders. Strategic leaders are extremely busy people and despite the best intentions, the reality is that, accessing them can be very difficult.

A researcher embarking on a similar study needs to ensure complete and absolute support for the process in advance and where the researcher's time is not a constraint the fieldwork becomes much easier. A period of full-time fieldwork is highly recommended. The 755 hours spent on this research, and which excludes the time spent on transcribing field notes, reading articles and books and writing the findings, is perhaps at best only a modest effort to understand the complex and illusive nature of what effective strategic leaders do and how they do it. As Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) have noted, capturing and describing such an all encompassing phenomenon could in fact be everything or nothing.

7.5.3 Black vs. white researchers

An opportunity exists for black and white researchers born and bred in South Africa to undertake similar research. My experiences were to a great extent shaped by my life history in Zimbabwe, where I was born and bred shielded away from the social catastrophe called apartheid, so it is possible that I may have missed nuances that someone who went through these experiences would have noticed. Personally, I do not believe that findings relating from this would materially impact the findings of this researcher. I say this because I have heard of situations where one is tolerated as a black person because that is the new dispensation of the country, but always with undertones of not being totally included. In this research which spanned over five years from inception, not once did I experience anything akin to this.

7.5.4 Discourse analysis from a lived experience perspective

In addition, much still needs to be explored about leadership discourse from a lived experience perspective. Literature surveys revealed research into speeches which presents an opportunity for research into discourse analysis in actual day to day lived experiences. The idea of leadership

as a social practice revealed through language, is an intriguing potential paradigm shift in how leadership is conceptualised and studied. The idea should be explored in future studies.

7.5.5 The need to test universality of findings

The findings of this research need to be tested beyond the nature of strategic leaders in the sample. The five strategic leaders were all white, middle-aged male executives. Strategic leaders of other races, nationality and age should be included in future research samples.

7.5.6 The need for female voices to be heard

The lived experience of the female strategic leader, of any race and age, provides another unique opportunity for research.

7.5.6 The definition of effectiveness

In this research effectiveness was defined according to organisational financial performance criteria. Perhaps other researchers may argue against the use of purely financial criteria to define effectiveness and would wish to include completely different measures such as culture, employee retention and satisfaction. The criteria used could result in a different sample of leaders being selected and possibly different results being achieved. Another possibility would be to include the views of subordinates in respect to the definition of effectiveness.

7.5.7 The use of an appropriate observation methodology

From the outset, my professor advised me to find a way to observe. I settled on Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) and undertook prolonged studies that have seen me qualified as a Master Practitioner in the field.

NLP methodology assisted me tremendously in observing language use (verbal, physiology, content, emotional) that I would not have readily observed had I not received the appropriate training in modelling human excellence. It is possible that there exist many other tools and processes that could be used in observation and thus it opens up opportunities for other researchers to see what I may not have seen.

At the end of both the first-level practitioner course and the master level course, I could see and notice what I had not being able to see before the training. I wonder what an astro-physicist trained leadership researcher or a brain surgeon would notice that I did not certainly highly skilled practitioners in discourse and conversation analysis would be able to identify other patterns that I may have missed.

7.5.8 Current knowledge, interests and experiences

One of the strengths of this research was that I chose a field of study and an industry in which I have significant knowledge so, as other researchers have put it (Samra-Fredericks, 2003) the effort remains bounded by my current knowledge, interests and experiences. It is possible, that researchers with other diverse interests researching the lived experience of executive leaders may provide different and unique insights and further add to the subject and knowledge of strategic leadership.

7.5.9 Exposure to non-related situations in analysis

A revealing moment occurred at Disneyland while experiencing the magical Mickey Mouse show, Fantasmic. It is clear to me that had I not had this experience, I possibly would not have found the appropriate metaphor to help me. As a student pilot, who has an interest in aviation, the black box analogy made sense to me. The question is what other researcher interests or hobbies could present metaphors that would enable a better understanding of the lived experience of the strategic leader?

7.5.10 Exploring the personal dimension

One evident omission is any observation of the CEOs personal lives. Given the current interest in work life balance, future studies should explore the ways in which strategic leaders engage or disengage their personal lives in leading an organisation.

7.5.11 Recommendations for practise and research

To the researcher planning an ethnographic research on strategic leaders I recommend thorough emotional and mental preparation for the challenge. There is also a need to ensure the

researcher has the time to do the qualitative research. Qualitative research demands commitment. A researcher needs to be prepared to accept that being granted access is not always automatic, and that shifts in priorities and diaries will in most cases not take the researcher into account. The researcher is bound to be continually frustrated and may even consider giving up on the fieldwork.

7.5.12 Towards a leadership development model

The pure leadership spider-web model provides a unique framework for creating a leadership development model. One could extend the metaphor of the spider-web to depict what this model could look like. At the core would be the effective strategic leader and feeding into this core, as the personal development process and the feedback loop, and also pulsating outwards, as the influencing process, would be the eight tentacles comprising each of the dimensions of the leadership spider-web model. Each of these tentacles would not stand alone but would be joined one to the other by a myriad of tiny strands thus creating a visual picture and a sense of a strong powerful and dynamic web. In summary, to be an effective strategic leader, using the leadership spider-web model as the development framework one would need to develop a personal leadership philosophy to live and lead by, master the common thinking patterns of strategic leaders, become a master at the use of language in all its forms, master the use of physiology as another form of language, and have the ability to utilise these four skills to create and manage emotional and mental states on both a personal and when engaging with others in order to inspire the hearts, minds, emotions of all stakeholders and move them to achieve desired organisational objectives.

Finally, an effective strategic leader, as an active doer, would need to be able to understand and appreciate the complexity inherent in becoming an effective strategic leader. The results of the study of spider-web construction has shown that the 16 steps a spider uses to construct a web are a metaphor and an analogy of the complexity of the process involved in mastering and implementing the pure leadership spider-web model.

A review of the pure leadership spider-web model reveals that each dimension has significant complexity within itself in order to master it. This complexity in becoming a CEO was inferred to an extent by Kets de Vries (2004) when he pointed out that (p67) "business leaders were much more complex than the subjects most psychoanalysts study."

For example developing a personal leadership philosophy entails:

- A deep understanding of the self leading to development of personal leadership philosophy
- a determined expression of the true self
- the choice to choose to stay the course (longevity) in an industry
- developing day by day intuitive 'gut-feel' leadership, a process that takes time
- making time for personal involvement in the operational side of the business while at the same time responsibly empowering direct reports
- developing a genuine passion for people
- developing a deep understanding of people
- implementing performance driven management and remuneration systems
- maintaining a thoroughly detailed focus on business processes
- implementing measurements and metrics to aid in business management
- personal self discipline
- maintaining high personal energy levels
- implementing relentless formal and informal communication across the board
- persistently and relentlessly ensuring a prioritised focus on both internal and external customers

On the other hand mastering the common thinking patterns that effective strategic leaders utilise means by definition a deep understanding of meta-programs, what they are and how they operate on a continuum. Because meta-programs are not static but process orientated the ability to master their use means the ability to be able to shift along a continuum as the need dictates, which entails a profound personal mastery and self-management ability. To attain this level of ability demands conscious study as well as time and monetary investment.

Another dimension which requires mastery, which may lead an aspiring strategic leader beyond the normal business school course, is the use of language in all its forms and structure. The researcher was able to identify the magical use of language by the strategic leaders only as a result of deep and prolonged trainings in the field of neuro-linguistic programming and neuro-semantics. Only by becoming a master practitioner in these fields, was the researcher able to unlock the impact and effect of language magic as depicted metaphorically by the Disney show and the spider-web model.

These findings indicate that to be an effective leader, the mental and emotional ability to explore and branch out into intuitive processes that may be traditionally considered unrelated business fields of study is a necessity. Kets de Vries (2004:p 66) pointed out that "unfortunately, the right side of the brain – the part responsible for more intuitive processes – is not stimulated in business schools". In order to develop strategic leaders in business schools, for example, varied courses on communication using story-telling and metaphors, understanding meta-programs, and the forms and structure of language need to be offered as part of all leadership development curricula. For those aspiring to become CEOs, business schools need to offer, or at least show, students how and where to obtain training and certification in NLP. NLP would equip them with the skills and tools to become masters at emotion and kinaesthetic patterns management as well as masters of the use of language. As part of the story-telling curricula business schools also ought to encourage aspiring CEOs to experience the magic of language based productions like Disneyland's Fantasmic. The aspiring strategic leader also needs the willingness to experience other areas of life that maybe uncommon to them.

7.5.13 Summary – an issue of time and experience

The complexity inherent in the pure leadership spider-web model as a leadership development model is alleviated by the finding that becoming an effective strategic leader is a process that inherently needs time and experience. A person desiring to become a strategic leader needs not just longevity in a chosen industry but also a conscious choice to become a student and master of all the dimensions of the pure leadership spider-web model. A conscious choice should also be

made to become an on-going student of this phenomenon, the lived experience of the strategic leader, using the experiences and environment in which one lives as a laboratory, to test and implement all that is being learned on the self and while engaging with others. Time, and the ongoing and open process of seeking knowledge within the interpretive approach, will lead to a deeper understanding of the lived experience of being a strategic leader (Sandberg, 2005).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. What are meta-programs?

The following description of meta-programs is extracted from Bob Bodenhamer's Training Manual on Meta-Programs that the researcher received during the June 2005 training course he took part in, in California, USA.

"Meta-Programs are those programs in our eyes (minds) by which we have learned to filter the world. As perceptual filters, our meta-programs identify what we sort for, pay attention to, look for, and see. They operate at a meta-level to the content of thought-emotion and awareness."

NLP founder Richard and Leslie Bandler originally discovered Meta-Programs from discovering how some patterns in classic NLP did not work. They discovered that Meta-Programs enable us to know when, how and why NLP patterns work, when they do and when they do not.

Sources: Meta-Programs arise from both nature and nurture – from natural dispositions and tendencies and from learning experiences. Meta-Programs, as we experience them, also arise from the solidifation of meta-states. They begin as a learned, taught, and/or coached way to think, sort, perceive, etc., and eventually become our metal program for such. As solidified meta-states, they are ways of thinking and conceptualising that have gotten in our eyes (meta-states coalesced into our muscles).

Continuum: Most of the Meta-Programs operate on a continuum. When there are choices on either end or pole this can lead to extreme versions of the particular Meta-Program and the creation of a Driver Meta-Program. When a person can easily move back and forth along the continuum, they have a high degree of flexibility of consciousness. This gives them more choices and power of response in different contexts.

Context dependent: Meta-Programs shift and change depending on context. This gives us the ability to operate with different Meta-Programs in different contexts, environments, situations, etc.

This also explains why Meta-Programs should not be used or confused with personality traits that define what a person is. These are not written in stone. They are descriptions of how we have learned to sort and process information. Rather than solidified personal traits, these are ways of functioning, ways of running our brain.

Changeable: Meta-Programs are changeable. The degree of changeability, on the other hand, depends on several factors: our beliefs about changing them, our desire and motivation, our willingness to give change processes a chance, the skill of the person working with us, and the patterns used in bringing about change. Any and every Meta-Program can be changed when there is a desire and a skilled practitioner.

Process Orientated: Meta-Programs refer to something we do, not what we are. It is how we see the world.

Profiling: Meta-programs are valuable for picking the right people and for reading people. They offer a way to find the leverage point for change, because they are learned structured programs that can be changed.

APPENDIX 2. The complete list Of 51 meta-programs

The "Mental-Cognitive" MP
Cognition/Reason/Thinking

1 Chunk Size

■ Global

■ Specific

  ■ These terms refer to the size of the "chunks" of information that we need in order to
    understand something.

#2 Relationship Sort

■ Sameness (Matching) – seeks to understand how something *matches* or fits with what one
  already knows.

■ Difference (Mismatching) – seeks to understand something in terms of how it differs from
  what one already knows.

#3 Representational Processing

■ Visual – pictures, internal movie

■ Auditory – sounds, tones, volume, etc.

■ Kinesthetic – body sensations

■ Language (Auditory Digital) – linguistic and symbolic systems (math, music, abstractions, etc.)

#4 & 5 Information Gathering

■ Where we tend to look for the source of the information we process:

  ■ Sensors – prefer their see-hear-feel senses and so operate in an "uptime" model of
    sensory awareness.

  ■ Intuitors – prefer to operate with their meanings (beliefs, values, experiences, gut feeling,
    etc.) and operate "downtime."

#6 Perceptual Sort

- Some minds operate more skillfully, and/or have received more training in discerning:
    - Broad categories or Black & White Thinking –
    - While others operate with more sophisticated discernment within the gray areas or in a Continuum between polarities.

#7 Attribution Sort

- Best Case/ Optimist - Empowered
- Worst Case/ Pessimist – Helpless

Do you look for problems, dangers, difficulties (Worst Case Scenario) or for solutions, opportunities, etc. (Best Case Scenario)?

#8 Perceptual Durability Sort

- What's the quality of your internal constructions? How permanent, solid, "real," firm (impermeable), or loose, weak, unreal and permeable are they?
    - Permeable – difficulty in keeping an idea front and center in the mind
    - Impermeable – concepts strong & stable

#9 Focus Sort

- Stimulus screening refers to how much of the environment we bring in and/or keep out?
    - Non-Screeners – highly distracted by the environment and stimuli around.
    - Screeners – more focused, easier time concentrating, less distracted. Can become inattentive, zoned out.

#10 Philosophical Direction Sort

- How our minds think in terms of philosophy. Do we care about more about source or solutions?
    - Why – Sort for the past, source of things, origins, where it comes from.

- How – Sort for use, purpose, practical concerns

#11 Reality Structure Sort

- How do we think about external reality itself –
    - Aristotelian – Sorts in terms of things being static, permanent, solid at the micro-level.
    - Non-Aristotelian – Sorts in terms of process, movement, change, flux, movement, non-things, etc.

#12 Communication Channel

- We have two primary channels, dimensions, modalities for sending/ receiving information—
    - Verbal & Digital: Sorts for words, language, terms, content of message.
    - Non-verbal & analogue: Sorts for body expressions: breathing, posture, muscle tone, gestures, eye scanning, tone and volume.

The "Feeling/Emotional" MP
Emotional/Somatic/Mood/Status

#13 Stress Coping Sort

- This MP refers to how one's nervous system at the neurological level moves toward or away from stressors, threats, dangers, and a sense of overload.
    - Passive or the *go away* Flight response
    - Aggressive or the *go at* Fight response
    - Assertive or the *mindful* response

#14 Referencing Style

- This MP relates to our sense or locus (location) of "control." Where do we posit it? Do we posit it inside or outside of ourselves?
    - Other and/or *External Reference*
    - Self or *Internal Reference*

#15 Emotional State

- This MP refers to our perceptual style. If we take a perceptual position of 2nd or 3rd rather than 1st we move to a dissociation of the information (and into other information).
  - Associated – feelings from 1st position
  - Dissociated – viewing world from 2nd or 3rd position

#16 Somatic Response Style

- This MP refers to how we *act out* our thoughts, emotions, and choices.
  - Inactive – generates little action
  - Active – quickly or immediately taking action
  - Reactive - unthinking acting, operating from a reactive style

#17a Convincer Sort

- This MP refers to the state of feeling convinced about something. How do you make your choices and decisions? Which sensory system do you use?
  - Visual
  - Auditory
  - Kinesthetic
  - Word   →

#17b Repetition Convincer Sort

- How many times do you have to be convinced in order for you to access the state of feeling convinced?
  - Never convinced – always disbelieve
  - Automatically convinced
  - Convinced by repetition – number of times
  - Period of Time — certain period of time

#18 Emotional Direction Sort

- Relates to the focus and diffusion of emotions; emotional style in emoting, focus and spread of emotions over experience.
  - Multi-Directional – experiences emotions as spreading all over and contaminating other facets of life
  - Uni-Directional – experiences emotions as staying contextualized to referent object

#19 Emotional Intensity Sort

- How much emotional exuberance or lack there as one emotes, especially in relation to others and to tasks.
  - Surgency: Experiences emotions with lots of intensity, very strongly, feels throughout body. Can lead to hysteria.
  - Desurgency: Experiences low level of emotional intensity; typically does not trust emotions, may not want them. Value certainty, predictability, stability.

The "Choosing Willing" MP
Choosing/Willing/ Intention-Attention

#20 Motivation Direction Sort

- Our motivational sort describes our orientation in the world in terms of how we take action and make choices of value and importance. Do we away from dangers or toward possibilities?
  - Away from – think first about dangers, threats
  - Toward – think first what person wants, goals, etc.

#21 Adaptation Style

- This MP relates to our adaptation style in the world.
  - Procedure – seeing the world in terms of specific procedures for how to do things
  - Options – seeing the world in terms of options, choices, inventing new ways…

#22 Adaptation Sort

- This MP refers to how we *adapt ourselves* as we move through the world.
  - Judger or adaptor – views the world by seeking to exercise control and manage.
  - Perceived or floater – views the world as whole and something to mostly observe, notice and experience rather than to manage or control

#23 Modal Operators

- These terms reflect our MO (or *modus operandi*) in the world, our style of operating with regard to events, tasks, people, information, etc.
  - Necessity
  - Desire
  - Impossibility
  - Possibility

#24 Preference Sort

- This MP refers to what we prefer as most important or significant in our choices.
  - People sort
  - Things sort
  - Location sort
  - Activity sort
  - Information sort
  - Time sort

#25 Goal Striving Sort

- Relates to how we adapt and respond to expectations, goals, outcomes, striving.
  - Perfectionism: Going for flawless perfection, focus on end-product, fearful of what could be wrong, etc.
  - Optimizing: Moving forward aiming to enjoy process and achieve aims, but taking numerous constraints into account.

- Defeatist/ Scepticism: Negatively anchored to concept; refuse to set goals, refuse to compete.

#26 Buying Sort

#27 Responsibility Sort

- A meta MP that addresses concept of personal power/ ability to respond and to be held accountable by others.
  - Under-Responsible: responds with lack of acceptance of owning or wanting responsibility.
  - Responsible: Appropriately balancing ownership of responses for self and to others.
  - Over-Responsible: takes on too much ownership, leading to care-taking, intrusion, over-involvement, stress.

#28 People Convincer Sort

- From how we feel convinced in general, this is how we sort for and respond to relating to others.
  - Distrusting – *Paranoid:* Immediately, automatically, and pervasively assume the worst of others, distrust – leads to jealousy.
  - Trusting — *Naive:* Immediately responds to others assuming trust, similarity, connections – leads to openness, warmth, etc.

The "Responding" MP
Outputting/Behaving/ Communicating

#29 Rejuvenation of Battery

- How we interact with and need or avoid people when we are feeling low or discouraged.
  - Extrovert: perception turns outward to others, desires companionship, encouragement, support.
  - Introvert: perception turns inward to self, wants privacy, time by self, etc.
  - Ambivert: uses both in a more balanced way with a sense of choice.

#30 Affiliation/Management

- Individual MP refers to preferring to work alone and assuming sole responsibility for a job or task.
- Team and Self MP refers to preferring to work with others and keeping responsibility for a task in one's own hands.
- Team MP refers to preferring to work and share responsibilities for an assignment with others and believes in the synergism of people working together.
- Management refers to being able to manage a process and make it succeed – a process described by leadership.
- Leadership refers to those who see and create new visions and setting new frames.

#31 Communication Stance

- This MP identifies the five basic communication stances known as the Satir Categories.
    - Placator – desperately wanting to please.
    - Blamer – taking charge by finding and putting blame on someone.
    - Distractor – wanting to *not* be known, to have to take a stance, and so constantly changes position.
    - Computer – wanting to operate exclusive from the intellect and to show no emotion, a kind of Mr. Spock.
    - Leveler – wanting to be straightforward and to simply disclose thoughts and emotions in an assertive way.

#32 General Response

- Congruently – in accordance with
- Incongruently – thinking one way but responding another way
- Competitive – comparison & competition
- Cooperative – assisting & helping
- Meta-Response – processing at a higher logical level

#33 Somatic Response

- Some people process information in a very active, quick, immediate, and impulsive way— the active style.
- Others engage in the handling of information much more reflectively, thoughtfully, slowly, etc. — the reflective style.
- Others do not seem to engage in information processing much at all, or at least with much reluctance— the inactive style.

#34 Work Preference Sort

- When we engage in "the significant activity" of work, career, vocation, etc., we operate with preferences about what to work with: *things, systems, people,* and information (This Meta-Program) relates closely to the *Affiliation Filter*, #30)

#35 Comparison Sort

- Related to how we filter as we compare things.
  - Quantitative: perceive things through *quanta*: numbers, ranks, orders, measurements, standards.
  - Qualitative: perceive things through *quality*: quality of an experience, person, or event.

#36 Knowledge Source Sort

- Modeling
- Conceptualizing
- Demonstrating
- Experiencing
- Authorizing

#37 Completion or Closure

- Sorting for the fullness or lack thereof of information.

- Closure: sorts for completeness, fullness of information, closure, story finished, loop ended.
- Non-Closure: doesn't make this sort, nice, but not necessary. Rests easily with ambiguity, confusion, open-ended processes.

#38 Social Presentation

- Relates to how we focus when relating to and interacting with others in a social context.
  - Shrewd & Artful: Filters for the social impression that we make, our presentation to others, carefully manages impression, fearful of negative impressions and judgments.
  - Genuine & Artless: Filters for being real, not being a fake, being one's own person, saying and thinking what one truly does, disvalues judgments of others.

#39 Hierarchal Dominance

- Developed by David McClelland about human interacting in work contexts and structures.
  - Power: sorts for the power of choosing, having control, competing, dominating; politically minded; win/lose mentality common.
  - Affiliation: sorts for connection, relationship, courtesy, getting along, win/win or even lose/win. Fears conflict and criticism.
  - Achievement: sorts for accomplishing things, getting things done, end products.

The "Conceptualizing" MP
The "Higher" Meta-Programs

#40 Value Sort – List of Values

Self-Meta-Programs

- Our sense of self has many facets and domains of experiences.
  - Temper to Instruction: *Strong-will — compliant*
  - Self-Esteem: *High or Low Esteeming; Conditional or Unconditional*

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- Self-Confidence: *High or low faith in skills, abilities*
- Self-Experience: Area & degree of Identification: *Mind, Emotion, Will, Role, Position, A-identification*
- *Self-Integrity: Conflicted Incongruity/ Integrated Harmony*

#41 Temper to Instruction

- This MP refers to our relationship to choice, instruction, command, authority, power, control, etc.
  - Compliance – those who "take" orders & comply with instructions
  - Strong Willed – those who define themselves in terms of will and freedom of choice

#42 Self-Esteem Sort

- This MP refers to the higher level belief frames we operate from with regard to our conceptual understandings about the value and dignity of a "self."
  - Conditional Self-Esteem – based upon any number of things
  - Unconditional Self-Esteem – unconditionally given

#43 Self-Confidence Sort

- This MP refers to one's feelings of confidence, trust, or faith in their skills and abilities.
  - Low Self-Confidence MP describes those who lack confidence to do a particular thing, and those who distrust their ability to learn.
  - High Self-Confidence MP describes those who have confidence in a particular activity, and it can refer to those who generally trust that they can learn and develop new skills.

#44 Self-Experience Sort

- Thought
- Emotion
- Choice
- Body
- Roles

- Experiences
- Status
- Degrees
- Speech
- Etc.

#45 Self-Integrity Sort

- The meta-program relates to how well do you live up to your values, rules, beliefs, etc.? It relates to the degree of your personal integrity. How do you live up to your ideals?
    - "When you think about how well or how poorly you live up to your ideals and in actualizing your ideal self, do you feel integrated, congruous, doing a good job in living true to your values and visions…
    - or do you feel torn, conflicted, un-integrated, incongruous?"

#46 Time Processing Sort

- Our processing of "time" in terms of the time zones of awareness refers to which time zone we prefer to sort for, pay attention to, and use in our calculating of things
    - Past time processing
    - Present time processing
    - Future time processing

Orientation to "Time" – Time-Line Patterns

- We humans uniquely have the transcendent ability to sort for "time."
- Time-Lines as one of the NLP models gives us a description of how we encode time.
- Our Time-Lines determine a good deal about personality.
- Where do you primarily live? Past, Present, Future?

Neuro-Semantics of "Time"

- "Time" – The Great Nominalization
- You have never tripped over "time."

- "Clocks" and "Calendars" allow us to measure the movement of activities.
- When we compare and measure one set of activities up against another set of activities, we invent the concept of "time."

"Time" Relationships

- How is your "relationship" with your concept of "time?"
- It can be "bad" or it can be "good."
- We are now in the world of neuro-semantics – higher level meanings *to* a concept.

#47 "Time Experience" Sort

- This MP has reference to how we code and process our Time-Lines
    - In-time – processing time in such a way that the line goes through us hence we live *inside of time*.
    - Through-time – processing time from a higher meta-level and so being *out of time*.

Concept of "Time" (Meta-Program)

- *In Time* – get "lost" in time.
    - Primary state of losing one's mind
    - "Flow" experiences - Eastern
    - Despise Calendars/Clocks.
- *Through Time* – Intuitively know "time."
    - Order and sequence oneself over "time."
    - Cares about "time." - Western
    - Loves Calendars/Clocks.

Time Line Configuration
#48 Time Access Sort

- This meta-program relates to how we *access* our memories of the past and functions as a sub-category of how we store or code "time" itself. Two overall patterns prevail:
    - Those who use a random accessing style

- And those who use a sequential accessing style.

#49 Ego-Strength Sort

- How well face the world, reality, facts, etc. - our degree of adjustment.
  - Unstable ─ Stable
  - Reactive ─ Stable ─ Proactive

#50 Morality Sort

- Relation to conscience, following moral and ethical principles.
  - Unconscientious Sort (Weak Super-Ego) – do not recognize or sort for true guilt
  - Conscientiousness (Strong Super-Ego) – sort for the rightness or wrongness of events, especially those that truly fulfill or violate genuine moral standards.

#51 Causation Sort

- This one relates to how we sort for "cause."
  - Causeless: no causes, all is by chance, random.
  - Linear Cause-Effect: Simplistic Stimulus-Response world
  - Multi-Cause-Effect: Many contributing influences, systemic
  - Personal CE: I cause whatever happens, at cause for everything
  - External CE: I cause nothing, it all comes from without, *blame!*
  - Magical CE: Superstitious beliefs about entities & forces in the universal causing things
  - Correlational: Recognizing things can happen simultaneous without a causational relationship

APPENDIX 2.1 External (independent) validation of results on meta-programs

Evaluation of the Meta-Program Section

Dissertation of George Wangirayi Nyabadza

By Bobby G. Bodenhamer, D.Min. (21st October 2006)

George focused intensely on all of the 2005 Neuro-Linguistic Program training. He was obviously enjoying the training. But, when we started studying the NLP Meta-Programs, George's focus intensified. He started taking extensive notes. He came alive to this new model. He quickly realised that in this Meta-Program Model were the means for him to discover those unconscious mental frames that separated the "successful" executive leader from the mediocre executive leader. Thus, ideas begin to flow from his mind concerning his Ph.D. dissertation.

Of course, as a trainer, to have a participant so deeply involved in the material that you are teaching is a real motivator. I was most interested in what George was developing. After about a year or more, George contacted me and asked if I would serve as the expert for his doctoral dissertation and especially for the section on Meta-Programs. I was delighted to do that for George as I was most interested in what kind of findings he would discover as he elicited the key Meta-Programs for successful executive leaders. Well, a few months ago, George started sending me the results of his study and did it ever excite me. His findings have ramification for executive leaders throughout the world of business and organisation.

My journey in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)

George advised me during the training that he was motivated by the use of NLP as his "how to observe" methodology for his dissertation. From my 16 years as an NLP Practitioner, I fully concur with this approach. I would like to share here my own background in NLP and how I have achieved international recognition in the field.

As a Christian minister, I entered into the study of NLP for the purpose of assisting emotionally hurting people with their emotional pain. In my undergraduate work, I minored in psychology and then in seminary I studied extensively in the field of pastoral care. In obtaining my doctorate, I did clinical training at Wake Medical Center in Raleigh, North Carolina and at Dorothea Dix State

Mental Hospital in Durham, North Carolina. Though most of my ministry focused on the pastorate, the field of psychology and especially pastoral counselling had always been an interest.

When I discovered, NLP, I along with several other pastors really became motivated for we finally found a model that we could utilise in our ministries that left us free to add our own theory, theology, psychology and philosophy. As a model that studies the structure of subjective experience, NLP offered us a tool to understand the "how" of what our parishioners were doing inside their head to create the pathology that they were suffering with.

NLP absolutely fascinated me and I absorbed myself in the literature and in the utilization of the tools in therapeutic work. Indeed, by 1991 most of my time was taken up with this work and it has remained that way for the past 16 years. From those early years of writing training manuals, I have had the privilege of combining with Cognitive Psychologist L. Michael Hall, Ph.D., in co-authoring nine books with him. Several of these books have become foundational books in the field.   Later, I co-authored with Developmental Psychologist, John Burton, Ed.D, the book "Hypnotic Language: Its Structure and Use".

And, then, quite by accident, I discovered that the NLP model had much to offer those people who suffer with a tremendous handicap known as stuttering or stammering. I utilized the NLP model to determine "how" people who stutter tend to stutter in some contexts and not in others. Basically, it is all about "fearing that they will block and stutter" that actually triggers the blocking. Of course, behind the fear and anxiety lie many learned negative frames of mind. Out of that work came my eleventh book entitled "Mastering Blocking and Stuttering: A Cognitive Approach to Achieving Fluency" published by Crown House Publishing in Wales, UK.

The Validity of using NLP as a "how to observe methodology"

Well, Bob, you are speaking about therapy. How in the world does this relate to the world of business and especially to Mr. Nyabadza's research? Quite simple – it doesn't matter whether or not the mind-body system is creating a pathology or a way to better motivate a subordinate, the mind-body system utilizes the exact same neuro-physiology. And, importantly, this includes the

utilization of the exact same mental structures in the obtaining of a certain behaviour aimed for a particular outcome. The structure remains the same. The content just changes.

The same tools that I used in modeling or discovering "how" a person creates a speech block are the exact same tools that George Nyabadza utilised in analyzing the thinking patterns of successful executive leaders. For example, a child growing up receiving affirmations, love, encouragement and possibility thinking will grow up layering their minds with many positive mental layers that will construct thinking patterns such as positive thinking, proactive behaviour, a 'can do' attitude, optimistic thinking, etc.

On the other hand, another child growing up in an environment where the child is called such labels as "stupid" and is not encouraged to reach their full potential will develop a totally different model of the world. A child who grows up without love, encouragement and is never affirmed will spend years layering their minds with such thoughts as "I am stupid." "My parents don't love me. I must be worthless. I am worthless." Etc. Such a child will mature into a person who thinks negatively, always looks for the bad, inactive with little or no motivation, worse case thinker, etc.

In both of the above examples, the exact same structuring of the mind is going on. The children are "layering" their minds with learnings received from parents and their environment. The structure of the layering is the same. However, because of the tremendous difference in the content and hence in the mental state developed, the outcomes are totally different as to personality.

So, whether I am discovering "how" a person performs a pathology or whether George is studying how a person is so successful as an executive leader, the underlying structure is the same. It is the job of the NLP Practitioner to determine the structures that make the difference. NLP has several models to assist the practitioner in discovering the "how" of any behaviour. These models include: The Representational System, The Meta-Model of Language, The Milton Model of Language, Reframing, Satir Categories, The Meta-States Model®, Time Lining, The Matrix Model, and Meta-Programs. George has utilized several of these models in modeling successful

executive leaders with emphasis on Meta-Programs which go to the heart of personality development and the understanding of it.

What is a Meta-Program?

"What in the world is a Meta-Program?" George Miller (1956) wrote his classic paper, "The magic Number 7 + or - 2", at the beginning of the Cognitive Psychology Movement. From his groundbreaking work, we now know that as humans we can only focus consciously on five to nine items at any given time. Well, that being true, how does the brain know what to focus on since the brain must delete from focus much information in order to "chunk down" to what the brain can process? Indeed, it is this "chunking down" to that number of which the brain can focus that describes what a Meta-Program is all about. The brain unconsciously and rapidly knows what to focus on based on the Meta-Programs of the person.

For instance, when you come into a new room, what do you first notice? Do you first notice the people in the room or do you first notice the furniture and other objects in the room. In other words, do you pay first attention to people or things? Or, when you start a new project, do you first determine your overall outcome for the project and from there chunk down to the smaller components required to carry out the overall outcome (deductive thinker) or do you first notice the details and from there you "chunk up" to the larger overall outcome or the big picture (inductive thinker)? Are you more motivated by what you want or what you don't want? Are you quick to act or do you need time for reflection prior to making a major decision? Do you tend to view the glass as half empty (pessimist) or half full (optimist)?

These Meta-Programs are those unconscious mental filters that we all have through which we sort our reality. Indeed, some refer to them as "Neuro-Sorts". That is an accurate description for these unconscious filters determine not only the what but also the how of what we allow into our brains. As such, they also determine how we shape the incoming information for personal experience. And, as we speak, we again filter our outgoing information through these filters.

Meta-Programs develop primarily early in life through constant mental repetition. Genetics may play a lesser role in the development of some of them. For instance, a child that grows up in a home where there is a great deal of disruption, insecurity, violence, etc. tends to develop a mental filter that states that the world is a fearful place and "I must always be on guard lest someone wants to hurt me." We call these people worst case scenario thinkers. Children who grow up in homes of alcoholics who are abusive when drinking tend to develop a worse case mental filter so that they can be prepared when "daddy comes home drunk and beats mom".

Their Usefulness

Since they operate unconsciously, as a rule most people will not even know that they exist. They just speak and listen all the while all their Meta-Programs (We have identified 51 in our book Figuring Out People. There are many more) are functioning determining how they both speak and listen. Other NLP Trainers refer to Meta-Programs as Patterns for they are very predictable. Though oft context dependent, we tend to react in the same way all the time. Thus, we can "predict" how a specific person will respond to certain situations if we know their Meta-Programs.

Wyatt Woodsmall, Ph.D. in the Foreword of our book Figuring Out People states:

> Meta-programs are probably the greatest contribution the field of NLP has made to understanding human differences. Only by understanding and appreciating human differences can we begin to respect and support other people whose models of the world differ dramatically from our own. Only by understanding human differences can we begin to replace animosity with understanding and antagonism with compassion. Only once we realize that other people are not just behaving the way that they do in order to spite us, but because that is their fundamental pattern can we begin to replace conflict with cooperation.

Meta-Programs answer such questions as:

- How does this person think-and-emote?
- How does this person talk, act, behave, and relate?
- What processes and patterns describe this person's style for sorting (paying attention to information)?

- What mental operational system does this person use in remembering?

- What human software (ideas, beliefs) does this person use to think?

- How effectively does this way of thinking work?

- How well do I like this way of emoting/somatising my ideas?

- How desirable do I find this way of talking and languaging?

- How resourceful does this way of sorting behaving actually work?

By focusing our attention on how people actually function in terms of their cognitive processing (thinking), emoting (somatising ideas into their bodies), speaking (languaging self and others), and behaving (responding, gesturing, relating, etc.) we discover – not what they "are," but how they actually work in any given context or situation. What is the value of this focus? Recognizing how a person works enables us to figure out their model of the world (their mental paradigm) that describes their internal "reality." This increases understanding. This enlightens us about "where the person comes from." It also increases our sense of empowerment. Why? Because in knowing how I work, or how someone else works, enables us to evaluate and match that working.

2.1.1 Efficacy of meta-programs for the study of effective leadership

Mr. Nyabadza states:

> In this he (Meindly et al., 1985) presents two arguments that support my proposed study on CEOs: the fact that the actions of top executives have not be the subject of empirical observation and secondly the fact that CEO actions usually have an impact on organisations over a period of time, months or years as he states. My study seeks to observe the behaviours of CEOs who have demonstrated effective performance, as measured by ROI relative to the industry, over a period of at least 3 years in one position in the same organisation (Italics mine).

In explaining his project to me, Mr. Nyabadza wrote to me his goal, "I set out to determine 'what effective leaders do and how they do it'." Do Meta-Programs have a place in such a study? Yes, most definitely, yes, in my view. Because Meta-Programs deal with the structure of how we think and therefore how we behave, they are of utmost importance in determining not only what leaders do, but more importantly, how they do it. Indeed, NLP began as a model for

understanding the how of subjective experience and it continues to do the same. Meta-Programs, as unconscious mental filters, are critical to the understanding of subjectivity.

How is it that one executive leader continually excels in leadership while another one, just as motivated, does not? You will find the answer in the how of the effective leader's thinking and behaving. Indeed, if Mr. Nyabadza's research is valid, a mediocre executive leader, but highly motivated, could take George's findings and primarily through repetition and practice, install into himself the Meta-Programs that George has discovered in effective leaders and dramatically improve his productivity.

Indeed, I have encouraged Mr. Nyabadza to take his findings and summarise them in a book that describes in every day language "How an Effective Leader Thinks". In my opinion, his research reveals this and it does so at a very deep and broad level. Unlike many books on the market today, George's findings reveal the complexity of an effective leader's thinking but it does so in a way that another executive leader could both grasp and express.

Findings

In utilizing the NLP Meta-Program Model, Mr. Nyabadza avoided the trap that many fall into when using personality instruments for analyzing how a person thinks. And, that trap is the tendency to typecast people according to an over-simplified model that tends to "pigeon hole" people in one category and assume that everywhere and in all contexts that person will behave in a certain way.

The NLP Meta-Program Model provided Mr. Nyabadza a tool for avoiding the trap of typecasting. You will see from his research that the executive leaders were evaluated according to many different sorting patterns. You can just simply not categorize people by just 4 typologies as some leading instruments attempt to do. Though sometimes helpful, these instruments can lead a executive leader to miss much that is going on with his subordinates and his superiors (and with himself).

It thrilled me when I read the results that George discovered. Isn't it absolutely amazing how much these five executive leaders think alike. Or, maybe it is not so amazing. Maybe it is not by accident that successful executive leaders think the same way for any executive leader who exhibits these sorting patterns will no doubt perform in like manner.

2.1.2 The use of meta-programs as a validation of results from observation

George's primary research methodology was observations in selected settings which provided the data and the results referred to above. George's use of Meta-Programs while providing accurate independent insight into how these executive leaders think also, from my analysis and interpretation provide sufficient validation of the other findings from the observations he undertook in the field, of leaders doing what they do.

As an example, as I read over the "The 10 Dimensions of Mickey's Magic Language Box", I immediately became aware of just how that model ties into the NLP model and specifically the Meta-Program's Model. The emphasis on this Disney Model is on the use of words – and linguistics is the middle word of NLP. In order for any executive leader to operate according to Mickey's Magic Language Box, that executive leader must operate from and out of certain key Meta-Programs. For brevity, I am just reviewing the Self Meta-Programs listed in Appendix 2. One could easily go through all the Meta-Programs in this example.

1. He must function from a Stable/Pro-active Ego Strength (#49).
2. He must be able to respond to stress in an aggressive manner by facing necessary stressors in a resourceful manner (#13).
3. He must not only know who he is (#49), but he must behave congruently with himself (#45).
4. He must be able to take risks (#19).
5. He must be able to make decisions without procrastinating (#16).
6. He must be flexible (#22).

7. He must know where he wants to go; how to get there and be determined to be successful in the attaining of his goals but in a very practical manner making necessary adjustments along the way (#25).

In all of the executive leaders that Mr. Nyabadza observed their Meta-Programs, they all exhibited the above strengths. I would have discovered the same behaviours (Meta-Programs) for such thinking is required of the person exhibiting the 10 Dimensions of Mickey's Magic Language Box.

Concluding Thoughts

As an NLP Master Trainer and Author, I am excited about this groundbreaking research into what top corporate leaders actually do as they lead successful organisations. It is my hope that these findings can one day be shared with other executive leaders and coaches around the world. George has performed a vital service in analyzing what successful executive leaders do – how they think and behave. Successful leadership is not by accident. It comes out of a mind-body system that thinks and behaves in a specific manner. NLP offers us tools for analyzing just "what" and "how" the successful executive leader thinks.

Endnotes

Hall, L. Michael, and Bodenhamer, Bob 1997, Figuring Out People: Design Engineering Using Meta-Programs, Crown House Publishing, Wales, UK.

Miller, George (1956). The magical number seven, plus or minus two: Some limits on our capacity to process information. Psychological Review: 63:81-97.

APPENDIX 3. Meta-States common among all five leaders

Humour (the ability to fuse a sense of enlightening humour into every engagement)	Logic (the ability to break issues into a logical pattern that was easy to interpret and deal with)	Envisioning (the ability to keep presenting the vision of the company in an exciting and engaging way while focusing on present operational issues)	Detailing (a passion for micro-details, an understanding that if a problem is broken down into its tiniest detail it will be easy to resolve)	Calm (the ability to remain outwardly calm in the face of challenges)	Persuasive (the ability to do what could be termed 'management by being persuasive' where leaders, once decided on a particular course of action, kept at it in many ways until buy-in was reached)	Empathetic (a strong sense of compassion towards people, not just as workers but as human beings with feelings, ambitions, goals and families)	Authentic Self Expression through personal values (an overriding compulsion to live and express one's true values)

APPENDIX 4. Meta-states that CEOs utilise during leadership engagement

This observation was carried out after the diary analysis indicated that CEOs spent time in what I called Leadership Engagement where the five strategic leaders shared best performance practices with other strategic leaders of similar size businesses within the same industry but were non-competing. The following were the meta-states that the strategic leaders utilised and displayed: humour, inquisitive, expanding the vision, detailing, calmness, rising to the challenge to improve own business, humility, respect for differing points of view, listening, encouraging and uplifting.

APPENDIX 5. Visual (V) Auditory (A) Kinaesthetic (K) patterns observed among all the five leaders

Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic are NLP defined individual primary representational systems that indicate how individuals primarily process or access information in their brains. For example, during a conversation, the tendency for a person to continually look up (the eyes up pattern) indicates a preference to accessing/ processing information visually, in pictures; the tendency for a person to continually maintain steady contact (eyes level pattern) indicates a preference to access/ process information in an auditory manner and the tendency for a person to continually cast their eyes down indicates a preference for accessing/ processing information using feelings and emotions, the kinaesthetic. The VAK patterns only indicate a primary preference and it is acknowledged that individuals can operate within any system and can, with practise, change their preferred primary representational system.

The NLP VAK template that the researcher developed enabled the observation of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic patterns exhibited by the different leaders.

While on both visual and auditory representation systems, no consistency was found among the five leaders the following were common patterns observed under the kinaesthetic representational system:

1. all five leaders exhibited the COMPUTER mode (a.k.a Mr. Cool) and also the LEVELER mode (factual and congruent) and

2. all five leaders exhibited an open arm/ inviting/ accessible physiology.

5.1 Perceived meeting dynamics

During observation the researcher also focused on noting the energy levels of each leader and also the nature of the dynamics of the meeting environment that each leader created. All five leaders had two features in common. The five leaders exhibited high intense and focused levels of personal energy. The five leaders created what the researcher experienced as a warm corporate family environment.

APPENDIX 6. Financial metrics and how the sample was selected

1. We isolated businesses whose average performances were above benchmark on all of the 18 metrics below over the five year period 1999 – 2003.

2. The benchmark for each metric was set at the South African automotive retail industry level of the 70th percentile; in other words to be above benchmark in each metric the average performance for the given period had to be above the 70th percentile level for all reporting businesses.

3. We then selected businesses whose current leader had been in that position for all of those five years.

4. We then subjectively chose seven friendly dealers who we expected to give of their precious time over the time of the study.

5. We approached them (using personal invitation letters drafted by the chairman of the consulting company that collates the performance database from over 700 different businesses on a monthly basis).

6. Eventually by a process of elimination we ended up with the five leaders who stayed the course.

7. The five participating leaders manage business structured as follows:

8. a franchise director in one of the country's largest automotive retail groups, which is part of a listed group of companies, and personally in charge of over fifteen dealerships;

9. a franchise director in a large automotive retail group in charge of over ten dealerships;

10. an owner of an independent (not part of a listed group) group made up of over six dealerships;

11. an owner of one of the largest dealerships in the country for his franchise; and

12. an owner of one of the largest dealerships in the country for his franchise and also owner of a group with two dealerships.

APPENDIX 6.1. The 18 financial metrics

Benchmarks - (weighted average 1999 - 2003) Overall (% = percentage)	Industry	
	Bench Mark	Median
	Sample size	432
Total Gross Profit as a % of Turn Over	13.08%	11.84%
Total Variable Expenses as a % of Turn Over	0.92%	1.20%
Total Direct Expense as a % of Turn Over	3.24%	3.87%
Total Employment Expenses as a % of Turn Over	2.04%	2.47%
Total Advertising Expenses as a % of Turn Over	0.27%	0.38%
Total Indirect Expenses as a % of Turn Over	3.62%	4.22%
Total Floorplan Interest as a % of Turn Over	0.30%	0.50%
Total Rent Expenses as a % of Turn Over	0.65%	0.86%
Total Admin. Expenses as a % of Turn Over	2.00%	2.47%
Other Income/Deduction % of TO	0.56%	0.35%
Return on Sales as a % of Turn Over	3.46%	2.52%
Net Profit as a % Total Gross Profit	26.48%	17.67%
Net Interest Paid as a % of Turn Over	0.53%	0.28%
Net Profit before Tax as % of Turn Over	3.22 %	2.14 %
Total Fixed Costs as a % of Turn Over	7.02%	8.08%
Total Fixed Cost as a % of Total Gross Profit	61.64%	68.85%
Total Expenses as a % of Turn Over	8.23%	9.36%
Total Expenses as a % Total Gross Profit	73.50%	79.98%

APPENDIX 7. Summary of diary analysis

DIARY ANALYSIS - summaries
ANALYSIS OF TIME UTILIZATION OVER A CONSECUTIVE THREE MONTH PERIOD

INCIDENT		leader 1	leader 2	leader 3	leader 4	leader 5
		% TIME UTILIZATION				
management meetings		14%	17%	12%	25%	12%
board meetings/ investor relations		4%	3%	9%	2%	9%
staff meetings		11%	4%	1%	11%	1%
mentoring/ coaching sessions		4%	4%	15%	5%	15%
customer issues - diarised		10%	3%	13%	5%	13%
dealer (for groups) visits {my direct reports}		6%	12%	13%	N/A	13%
Head Office visits		2%	N/A	0.01	N/A	1%
Management by Walking Around		12%	14%	10%	6%	10%
OEM/ Suppliers/ Banks/ Networks		11%	17%	5%	20%	5%
Leadership Engagement		13%	15%	10%	11%	10%
admin {my own time}		13%	11%	11%	15%	11%
TOTAL (100 %)		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

SHADED AREAS INDICATE CRITICAL INCIDENTS OBSERVED.

The pseudo names have not been used in this table to further minimize the chances of identifying the two strategic leaders who own their businesses, which businesses are leaders in their franchises. They have zero time reflected for head office visits.

APPENDIX 8. Post-diary analysis: meta-states during face time leadership

This observation was carried out after the diary analysis indicated CEOs spent a great deal of time managing by walking around and having quality face time with the people they met. It was not practical to walk with them and to write down all the detail of conversation (language) but the researcher was able to note the manner of mental/ emotional states exhibited and to match this to earlier analysis of such states from other observation. The common meta-states observed are: humour, logic, talking the vision, detailing, calmness, persuasiveness and a determination to succeed, empathetic, focus on each individual, customer focussed orientation, encouraging and uplifting.

APPENDIX 9. Extracts from personal leadership philosophy discussions

The following recordings are direct extracts from my field note book, and are here recorded verbatim in a format as close to how I recorded them originally. In addition to the use of pseudo-names, information that would reveal the identities of the leaders has been edited out, in accordance with the confidentiality agreement with them.

Meeting with Sharkira Hawk

- on time management
    - in at 6.30 am and out at 7 pm
    - here on Saturdays
        - leading by example has led to staff enthusiasm.
            - I have never told them to work till 7 pm but they do
- I have been in the industry since 1970 (34 years)
- On business philosophy
    - Business is simple
        - Self-discipline
        - Enthusiasm
        - Hard work as core part of life
            - My father used to say "People can't steal your education" {the researcher's thoughts at the time "sounds exactly like my dad, ok now, lets focus"}
- On management style
    - I have an entrepreneurial style
        - I give guys guidelines.
        - They make money and also earn good money.
        - I tell them 'don't ever lie once or I'll never believe you'.
        - I allow time to meet on Saturdays one-to-one.
- On strategic planning
    - It's in you head.

- o I live it.
- o Like a gun, I think quick and I work fast.
- o You can't have it written down as A, B, C, and D.
- o The market is dynamic.
    - So you need to be responsive to the market.
- On understanding people
    - o In life there is two important things needed to understand people
        - Red and Green buttons
            - Red buttons
                - o The things that pisses him off
            - Green buttons
                - o The things that turn him on and makes him happy
        - You have to go out and buy a blanket and a hot water bottle and cover the red buttons and keep them warm and then push and *#!$ the green buttons.
            - This will make people perform miracles.
            - It cuts down on staff turnover.
- You always need to create win-win relationships.
    - o Lesson from our group founder
        - If there are two parties to a deal and there are two R2 coins on the table, and one party leaves with both, then it's a bad deal but if both parties leave with a coin each then it's a good deal.

Meeting with Kehoe Banks

- We support the local community and ask them to help us e.g., we will help school if parents will buy our cars.
- I have a great team.
    - o Each person is a Managing Director of their own unit.

- - We cascade performance management down to the floor level.
  - If someone doesn't row on the ship they get to know about it and are told 'get off the boat or do the rowing'.
- High potential employees are promoted yearly to succeed people moving on in the group.
  - I therefore have yearly succession plans.
  - I have grown people into positions and I have identified an understudy for me who is the first black understudy in the group.
- I can't handle non-performance
  - Non-performers steal from us.
- We have a 98 % achievement in employment equity.
- I use the brains, the legs and the hands.
  - I recruit by looking at the people's energy because if there is energy something happens.
- I believe in communication, I communicate through the communication committee on which even a cleaner's representative sits.
- I believe in empowering people to act.
  - An example is a cleaner who needed a drivers' license to move cars but now she is a receptionist and a driver in the group.
- My direct reports have leadership responsibility.
  - I am just the batteries for their clock.
- I believe in management by walking around.
- I call everyone by name.
- I speak to people by walking.
- The question to ask is 'Who switches the light on in the dealership?'
  - You determine if it's dark or light in your dealership.
  - If you walk around and smile and greet people then you switch on the light.
- Every second week, we have a happy hour where we provide drinks and pizza.
  - Don't always use money to reward people, use gift vouchers.
- All staff members are essentially shareholders in the business.

- I believe in evident commitment, from my direct reports and all staff.
  - Senior managers should manage by example e.g. be at work early (6.30 a.m).
- On relationship with direct reports.
  - Regular visits, at least once every two weeks.
  - They are the Managing Directors of their divisions.
  - I manage and so they should manage by example.
    - There was once a Dealer Principal who was on the golf course when customers where complaining and he got the CRAP but he has since changed.
  - I talk to people in the dealership as well.
  - I hold regular feedback/ communication sessions.
    - The Operational Committee meeting meets once a month, determines awards for performance.
    - Budgeting is a standard process. Each Dealer Principal prepares a power point presentation with all his heads of department. This develops a mindset change that is then cascaded down to the sales manager and his people.
  - I greet service customers and give them my own card to call if they have queries.

Meeting with Dove Patience

- I have been here for 20 years.
- We have become more of oil tanker or an ocean liner, as we have successfully built a massive and influential business.
- We operate on average an advertising budget that is three times the average of other dealers countrywide.
- We have no staff turnover at all.
- We are 100 % performance driven.

- My business partner complements me, his strengths are my weaknesses, and my strengths overcome his weaknesses.
- I am a marketer, I drive revenue and revenue growth and I work with people.
- On high staff retention and the resultant positive impact on business.
    - This is not a threatening environment. Some of our people have been here for 15-20 years. The longer they stay the more they earn.
- Structure of meetings
    - Management meetings occur every Monday morning from 7.30 – 8.30.
    - Sales meetings are weekly. There is a deep analysis and measurement of sales (buyers, market, sales persons). It's management by statistics.

Meeting with Robbins M. Jackson

- on management philosophy
    - It's off the seat of your pants at higher and higher levels in the organisation. You make fewer decisions of great value. The higher you go the less information readily available and the more the single big decisions. At lower operational levels you make more operational decisions but with more information. At higher level you look and gaze into your crystal ball e.g. our management buyout decision. You have quantitative information and not qualitative information. Hence I say you make decisions by the seat of the pants.
    - Going forward my ability to sell is key. At higher levels I am a sales man and I sell to management enthusiasm and motivation. My role becomes more of a POP psychologist as I powder their bums and clean their bums and keep them highly motivated.
- On personal style
    - I shift credit to the people and take responsibility for failures.
    - I treat my business finances like personal finances.
    - All people like to succeed.

- All people like a cuddle.
- Customers are priority; if I am visiting with staff and customers come in, the staff must go to the customer.
- I run the business like a family and my family like a business.
  - I give them the best education.
  - Teach them finances.
  - Discipline, love and respect.
  - For kids I must respect and love kids but it is incumbent upon me to earn their respect. If my kid is in trouble at 2 a.m, I get up and go straight away. Similarly your staff needs to know that if they run into trouble at 2 a.m you will be there.

- We have 400 staff so roughly with a factor of 7 = 2800 people dependent on the business
  - Staff are the key stakeholders because remuneration is paid as a percentage of profit and is the highest account item in our books.
  - Our organisations structure is an inverted triangle because we look after our staff. If I or the management is not around the business should and will carry on
- Key fundamentals
  - You must know your people. Show and earn staff respect. 50 % of all promotion money is spent on the staff. You must have the right people. If our staff are the right people, we can do anything.
  - I keep playing pop psychology. I believe in people. I trust people.
  - I believe middle managers must understand accounting. For a doctor if a kid is sick they can talk 'kid language' to the kid while they treat the child. A vet can read an animal and say what's wrong with it. A businessman can read the 'intangible' of the accounts and read the vital communication of the business.
  - People are Prime! Prime! Prime! With the right people you can achieve the goal versus property's Location! Location! Location!
  - On performance
    - When a man fails we do not let him go. We lift him up and he can regroup and rise up again. No man wants to fail because people

inherently want to succeed. I'd rather have a man who has tried and failed than one who has never failed.

- On business structure
  - We run on a basis of structure, systems, and discipline. The system provides the ability to control. Within the prescribed parameters the business can operate

- On communication
  - People want to know what is expected of them
    - Think of a kid putting a finger in the electric plug hole. He/ she needs to be explained what will happen, that there will be pain and that if they repeat they can expect to be disciplined. It's crucial that people understand the full role of their job position.

- On speaking
  - Once words are out of your mouth they are gone. So avoid knee jerk reactions. Avoid I saw, I conquered, I came. Instead adopt the following listen, think, respond. This process allows emotions to go away. Always delay a decision if you can.

- On knowing staff
  - At a recent function I introduced myself to a new member of staff and he turned around and said, 'I know, I work for you. I have been two weeks in the company.'
    - It's inexcusable not to know new staff within 2 weeks. These people make it possible for me to have an income. We are in this boat together. The hierarchy is for responsibility purposes only. We are all employees

- On key personal change events
  - We moved to Swaziland with my family because we decided that "if we came back to South Africa as racists then it's by personal choice and not because of indoctrination". Fundamentally, the best thing that ever happened to us. I had a black boss and it was a total eye opener to realize that my boss had the same aspirations as I did.
    - Earn a living.

- - Create opportunities and education for our children.
  - Each parent wants each child to do better than each parent.
- On empowerment
  - The good people will take the opportunity to come through the system.
  - It will create a black middle class.
  - A skills transfer needs to be done.
- Further thoughts on leadership philosophy
  - You can not respect yourself if you can not respect others.
  - Once you say something you can not take it back.
  - If you can manage a woman you can manage anything in your life.
  - When you shave, look at yourself in the eye and say "I can live with this guy".
  - Always know your own self-worth.
- On falling in love with staff
  - I remember talking to this short fat man, who always dated the most stunning blondes, who said "Boys fall in love with their eyes and women fall in love with their ears".
    - I keep this in mind when falling in love with staff. You are not a good manager because of how you look but how you fall in love with staff
  - The Big BOSS syndrome is gone. When staff make time to come to your office to talk – MAKE TIME! Because they have probably been 'sucking up' the courage to do so the all morning.
- More reflections on personal style
  - My job changes from day to day. There is little structure to my day; management meetings; review of objectives and progress and so on. A CEO who can tell you what their whole day is like is looking for operational structure because at this level only 40 % would be structured, the rest should be for introspection. You cannot be proactive. It's the speed with which you can react to the environment that matters. You should be flexible enough to react to change.
- On meetings

- o I only claim the right to veto. The rest of the responsibility is with the Executive team. For creativity have large committees and for decision have small committees. Sometimes meetings appear unstructured. A good chairman picks up the gems/ pearls and then at the end picks up on them for elaboration.

A meeting with Dolphin Structura

- Personal background
  - o I was once upon a time a senior corporate executive with a car vehicle manufacturer as a sales director and a general manager. I was also once a regional manager and sales manager with another car manufacturer. I have strong wholesale background with car manufacturers and now in retail (dealership) operations. I think corporately in an independent retail situation. All processes are driven as a corporate organisation.
    - Formal meetings with formal agendas. This has helped the transition from only one rural dealership to successfully managing the new large urban facility. The first rural dealership was process driven and the third dealership will also be easy to bring into the fold. Corporate experience taught me core values in managing an organisation. I am building an independent group in a corporate process driven way.
- Common behaviour patterns
  - o Long-term planning, communication skills, positive attitude towards staff, the importance of staff, the ability to affect change and understanding the changing environment.
- With respect to long term planning in the midst of the boom, we are currently planning for the next cyclical downturn in the economy using scenario planning; what if economy cools down at one percent per annum for the next five years or what if it stagnant?
- Staff is the largest cost structure, but at what level do you stop cutting into the muscles of the business so that you are still able to service the customer.

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- We make sure planning does not reach the second tier management; it's a board responsibility because planning creates uncertainty and instability. Planning generates anxiety at operational level and planning is therefore a top management process.
- I strive to maintain efficiencies and morale at all times.
- In terms of relationship with our (franchise) car manufacturer our commitment to the franchise is paramount. I tell staff "If you criticize the manufacturer I will fire you! Whatever opinions you have of the franchise must be constructive." Our commitment enables the manufacturer to provide us favours as they (the latter) love to hear our planning strategy and voice.
- Staff
  - Always being developed to be the best, even at, what may appear as the expense of business. We do not tolerate cancelling training due to being busy or delivering vehicles. Training and retraining is a fundamental process. All training is scheduled, diarized and planned for. There is no cancellation of training due to business pressures. My philosophy is that the retail industry has the worst staff retention but our turnover is negligible (0.1 %).
  - If a guy is trainable then if he does not perform there is something wrong with the business processes, because to relive him of his duties and to re-train a new person will cost +/- R100,000. So, we ask: is he in the right place? Is he motivated? Are there personal problems? What role can we play in the process? We must play a role in the process. We don't fire people due to non-performance.
  - A good salesman is a high maintenance person because they are usually highly emotional, have unstable or highly unstable family lifestyles, financially unstable, excellent when performing and bad when not performing.
  - We get involved in our staff's social lives. We involve counsellors; we know about pending divorces, because the health of our staff is important we get involved thoroughly.

- For example, one sales guy was exceptionally successful but unstable in terms of performance. He never spoke to anyone. So he would perform and then disappear for two or three days after selling eight or nine units per month. I, (the CEO) called him in and asked what was happening. And he said that he wanted to be a super achiever and to be rich, but that he was struggling to accept a pending divorce. He had kids and was living separately with wife. The kids were taking second place in the decision. Four counselling sessions were arranged for him and the result was that he bought his own place. He accepted the divorce. Now he has a new relationship. He sees the kids every weekend, and he says "now I feel better about myself".
    - We educate our staff for the future.
- Young people in the organisation
    - While we train all our youngsters fully, we are willing to let them go. Training and development is not for us alone but for the industry as a whole. If we can put a young executive elsewhere in the industry because we can not provide for the opportunities we let them go.
- Trust in any organisation stems from the CEO (I have been for that past 7 years). You know most retail shop managers carry bunches of keys tied to their waist due to mistrust. 7 years ago, I redistributed all the keys that managers carried around and handed them to the responsible people. This led to a reduction in theft of parts, batteries, calculators. Our obsolescence is less than one percent where the industry benchmark is around three percent. Trust is also strengthened by training, discipline, performance and socializing.
- Decision making authority
    - If a CEO always questions whether final decision making lies in him then he is instilling mistrust. If any doubts arise from the ranks about decision making then all queries are aired and debated and full support is given to the decision maker. Each person has full decision making authority within the budget.
- New Entrants

- o Usually find it difficult to work in this environment because they experience a radical culture switch; so I talk to new entrants independently over the first two months. Usually after four weeks they begin to ascribe to the organisation's discipline and culture.
- On being CEO
  - o There is a difference between being CEO within a group versus being independent (as I am). A CEO always works and leads by example. You must have passion for the business you are in; otherwise you can not inspire people. My passion is the dynamics of the business, even after 33 years; yes the people and the processes.
  - o You cannot window dress, you must have a genuine passion.
  - o I am not in the motor business: I am a manager of processes within the industry.
  - o My office window overlooks the showroom and I observe customer interactions daily.
  - o You can not arrive at 11 am and leave at 4 pm as a matter of course. 90% of the time you must open the door and close it at night (7 am to 6 pm). Be one with the staff, you need to be there with staff during the long hours and weekends. If you don't love the drive then leave the business.
- On Family
  - o I have two families: a corporate family of over a hundred and forty people and a private family of a wife and three kids.
- On succession
  - ▪ I had to decide whether to allow my family into the business and bring in potential conflict. I made a difficult decision that never will my kids directly or indirectly work in my business. A CEO should be as impartial as possible, to trust emphatically and to never bring family into the business. I, instead, brought in young managers and gave them equity in the dealerships. I am training them to take over the business.
- Public Relations with Customers

- o CSI (Customer Satisfaction Index) is driven from the top through the culture of the organisation. You must always guard against being distant from the customer. We bring them (customers) in for coffee or to see our new business processes. This provides good feedback for service levels. We implement arising suggestions very quickly. Customers are called in to test implemented suggestions. We have made very good friends with customers and on Saturday we have some just come in to have coffee and just hang around. Our customers are our friends and we have genuine relationships.

- Culture
  - o We have a respect for everything and everyone; peers, budget, making profit, customers. We stand up and greet customers and allow them to sit down first. Anyone who treats customers with disrespect is fired. Our greatest achievement in the past fourteen years is that we have never lost a day due to strike, not even for national strikes. We provide pick up/ drop off at police stations during national strikes because we treat our people with respect.

- We have a successful Black Economic Empowerment partnership. We are a fully participative player in the South Africa process and do not tolerate no window dressing but treat our partners with respect. We do not have black and white processes, no separate Xmas parties for staff and management. We have never had a black-white clash at all.

- On overall performance; for us the total process needs focus and not just the financial, but the most important is staff.

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