21st CENTURY DESIRABLE LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FIRMS IN NORTH AMERICAN METROPOLISES

by

Ralph Baeza

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Business Administration

Liberty University
August 2018
Abstract

Professional service firms (PSFs) in North American metropolises are facing challenges in doing business in a fast pace global society with environments which require them to cope with increasing size, complexity and conflict management, to shape and coordinate the right culture that meets their strategic goals, and creates sustainability with legacy. This requires to address retaining and developing leaders and emerging leaders, and pursue their commitment to a long and productive career, in their organizations. Thus, this case study is an exercise of depth that reflects the uniqueness in the lives of leaders in PSFs similar to the organization where the participants are employed to help them and other leaders in fostering a culture that develops and retains good leaders with authentic, servant, and transformational leadership characteristics. The participants’ enthusiasm and collaboration about their understanding of desirable leadership characteristics to be a continuous process to improve their own desirable leadership characteristics and practical approaches and implications when relating with all the stakeholders in the organization, is a testimony of leaders who want to build the right culture in a PSF. The findings in this study provide insightful information to help professional services firms’ leaders, business students, and practitioners with valuable insights in knowledge to promote desirable leadership characteristics in PSFs, thus fostering the development and retention of leaders for sustainability with legacy. This is accordance with the biblical leadership model given by Jesus with character, knowledge, creativity, drive, courage, caring, and discipline.
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August 2018

Dr. Gene Sullivan, Dissertation Chair

Dr. Keith Mathis, Dissertation Committee Member

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Remembering Brett McKinstry, PE, LEED AP

Remembering Brett McKinstry, PE, LEED AP, TLC Engineering for Architecture, Inc.,
Chief Operating Officer, for his dedication and commitment as an authentic, servant, and transformational leader in his family, organization, and community.

- He was someone who exhibited a behavior with self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balance the processing of ideas and relational transparency.
- He was someone who developed the self-knowledge through an active, continuous disposition of self-examination regarding own actions and listening to others when receiving information about the self.
- He applied the process of teaching others to lead.
- He was a person who had an attitude of service by being authentic, vulnerable, accepting, present, and useful. Thus, placed the good of followers over their own self-interest and emphasized follower development.
- He accepted one another as a leader as opposed to being self-empowered as a single leader.
- He was someone who engaged with others and created a connection that raised the level of motivation in the leader and the follower.

Brett McKinstry was a great leader in TLC Engineering for Architecture, Inc., by fostering a culture of sustainability with legacy that developed and retained organizational leaders, for the present and future of this organization, by practicing authentic, servant, and transformational leadership behaviors.
Dedication

To my God, who created me for His special and specific purpose, to be His son and servant, thus to give Him all glory and honor in my life, which is His, now and forever.

To my beloved wife and lifetime companion, Alice, our three daughters, Mary Elizabeth, Georgette Josephine, and Natalie Denise, my sons-in-law, Leodanny, Daniel and Benjamin, and my grandchildren Ava Isabel, Helen Carolina and Benjamin Adam all of whom are a precious gifts from God for me to treasure, love, appreciate, value, cherish, prize, serve, and give them my life as an example of commitment to pursue the presence, knowledge, and service of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To my unforgettable friend and business partner Bret Mckinstry, PE, LEED AP, TLC Engineering for Architecture, Inc., Chief Operating Officer, for his dedication and commitment as an authentic, servant, and transformational leader in the organization.

To my Spaniard and Western European heritage given by God, who allowed me to be born in Madrid, Spain, where both of my parents met during their days as students at the “Universidad Complutense de Madrid” in the 1950s. Furthermore, I am grateful for my Andalusian ethnic and cultural background from the provinces of Malaga and Jaen in Spain, where my mother, Maria Isabel Baeza, grandparents, Salvador Baeza and Juana Aguilar, and my uncles, Gumersindo Aguilar, Alonso Aguilar, Consuelo Aguilar, Andres Aguilar, and Sebastian Aguilar were all born.
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I thank Dr. Gene Sullivan, my research project chair, for all his support, inspiration, and motivation during this academic journey. He continuous to demonstrate a life led by the Holy Spirit for the glory and honor of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as he fulfills his call in the School of Business at Liberty University.

I thank all the leaders and shareholders in TLC Engineering for Architecture and those who participated in this study interview process and took the time to provide me with their feedback to the questions they were asked to give their opinion about desirable leadership characteristics in professional services firms.

I thank all my professors in the Doctor of Business Administration program at the School of Business at Liberty University who taught me business and leadership principles and methods within a biblical worldview and showed their commitment to give glory and honor to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I thank all who had or have lived, preached, taught, and written for my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, fulfilling His Great Commission to live righteous and godly lives and to make disciples of all nations. Some of these influential people whose example have been an inspiration in my life pilgrimage on Earth are the Apostle Paul, Brother Lawrence, David Livingston, Hudson Taylor, Charles Spurgeon, Dwight L. Moody, Oswald Chambers, Jerry Falwell, Robert Beatty, Gary Cohen, Elmer Towns, John MacArthur, James Dobson, Charles Swindoll, Luis Palau, D. James Kennedy, Norman Geisler, Ravi Zacharias, Erwin Lutzer, Harold Wilmington and many others who were given the privilege by God to affect many generations of believers in Christendom.
Table of Contents

List of Tables .....................................................................................................................v

Section 1: Foundation of the Study.................................................................................1

Background of the Problem .............................................................................................1
Problem Statement .............................................................................................................2
Purpose Statement ...........................................................................................................3
Nature of the Study ..........................................................................................................3
Research Question ..........................................................................................................5

Conceptual Framework ..................................................................................................6

Authentic Leadership Theory ............................................................................................7
Servant Leadership Theory ..............................................................................................8
Transformational Leadership Theory ..............................................................................10
Organization Design and Implementing Organizational Change Theories ...............11

Definition of Terms ........................................................................................................12

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations .................................................................13

Assumptions ....................................................................................................................13
Limitations .......................................................................................................................14
Delimitations ...................................................................................................................14

Significance of the Study .................................................................................................14

Reduction of Gaps ...........................................................................................................14
Implications for Biblical Integration ...............................................................................15
Authentic Leadership Theory ........................................................................................16
Servant Leadership Theory ...........................................................................................17
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transformational Leadership Theory</th>
<th>19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to Field of Study</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Environment in Professional Services Firms</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Business Environment</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes and Challenges</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Practices</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic Leadership Desirable Characteristics in Professional Service Firms</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant Leadership Desirable Characteristics in Professional Service Firms</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership Desirable Characteristics in Professional Service Firms</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of Leadership Characteristics on Leader Development and Retention in Professional Service Firms</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition and Summary</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2: The Project</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose Statement</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the Researcher</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Method and Design</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population and Sampling</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruments</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection Technique</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Organization Techniques</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis Technique</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability and Validity</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validity</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition and Summary</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of the Study</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of the Findings</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of a Good Leader</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of a Leader Who Develops Future Generations of Leaders</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of a Leader Who Retains Future Generations of Leaders</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of a Leader Who Fosters a Culture with Legacy for Organization Sustainability Beyond Him or Herself</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of a Leader Who Fosters Authentic Leadership</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of a Leader Who Fosters Servant Leadership</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of a Leader Who Fosters Transformational Leadership</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary and Conclusions</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications to Professional Practice</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Practice</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical Framework</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 1. Research Study Design Methods ................................................................. 4
Table 2. Transformational Leadership Characteristics by Paul .................................... 20
Table 3. Servant Leadership Areas of Behavior ......................................................... 41
Table 4. Transformational Leadership Characteristics ................................................. 50
Table 5. Characteristics of a Good Leader ................................................................. 74
Table 6. Good Leadership Examples ........................................................................ 75
Table 7. Non Good Leadership Examples .................................................................... 75
Table 8. Good Leadership Behaviors Fostered in the PSF ......................................... 76
Table 9. Characteristics of Leaders Developing Future Generations of Leaders ......... 78
Table 10. Developing Future Generation of Leaders Examples .................................. 79
Table 11. Non Developing Future Generation of Leaders Examples .............................. 80
Table 12. Developing Future Generations Behaviors Fostered in the PSF .................. 80
Table 13. Characteristics of Leaders Retaining Future Generations of Leaders ........... 82
Table 14. Retaining Future Generation of Leaders Examples ..................................... 84
Table 15. Retaining Future Generations Behaviors Fostered in the PSF ...................... 85
Table 16. Characteristics of Leaders Establishing Legacy and Sustainability ............. 87
Table 17. Establishing a Culture of Legacy and Sustainability Examples .................... 88
Table 18. Non Establishing a Culture of Legacy and Sustainability ............................. 89
Table 19. Legacy and Sustainability Behaviors Fostered in the PSF ............................ 89
Table 20. Characteristics of an Authentic Leader ....................................................... 91
Table 21. Authentic Leadership Examples .................................................................. 93
Table 22. Non Authentic Leadership Examples ......................................................... 93
Table 23. Authentic Leadership Behaviors Fostered in the PSF ................................................. 94
Table 24. Characteristics of Servant Leadership ........................................................................ 96
Table 25. Servant Leadership Examples ................................................................................. 97
Table 26. Non-Servant Leadership Examples .......................................................................... 97
Table 27. Servant Leadership Examples Fostered in the PSF .................................................. 98
Table 28. Characteristics of Transformational Leadership ...................................................... 100
Table 29. Transformational Leadership Examples .................................................................. 101
Table 30. Non-Transformational Leadership Examples .......................................................... 102
Table 31. Leadership Characteristics in a PSF ...................................................................... 104
Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The approach followed by leaders to managing and planning today’s organizations, due to the continuous changes and evolution of our contemporary society and global world environments, is different today than at the end of the 20th century. These environments affect organizations, such as professional services firms (PSFs) based in North American metropolises, which are facing challenges that require them to adapt in doing business in a fast pace global society, by coping with increasing size and complexity, managing internal conflict, and shaping and coordinating the right organizational culture to meet their strategic goals.

These PSFs are characterized with complexity, unpredictability and turbulence in the day to day activities and experiences by the men and women serving in leadership positions in these organizations (Bergquist & Mura, 2011). Thus, having profound consequences in organizational planning for leadership development and succession. This section describes the foundation of the study by addressing the background of the problem, problem statement, purpose statement, nature of the study, research question, conceptual framework, definition of terms, assumptions, limitations and delimitations, significance of the study, and the review of the professional and academic literature.

**Background of the Problem**

PSFs, such as consulting engineering firms, perform work that is project or program oriented, serving the needs of external client organizations or customers, with interdisciplinary and complex nature and team approach. They have within their purposes to deliver outstanding client service, provide meaningful careers with professional satisfaction to their employees, and achieve financial success that can reward their people and promote growth (Maister, 1993).
PSFs firms are confronting an increased pressure for global services, expansion of services and location, delivery of more integrated services, investment in technology and significant increases in the costs of attracting, retaining and rewarding for human resources talent (Strumpf, Doh, & Clark, 2002). These trends, along with an increasing use of technology, shortage of skilled workers, aging workforce, increasing the number of careers over a lifetime, and increasing generational diversity and multi culturalism in the workforce, further demonstrate the need of establish leadership’s development and retention for results in accordance with the strategic goals of these companies (Bennett & Bush, 2009).

Doucet, Lapalme, Simard, and Tremblay (2015) explained the importance of high-involvement management practices, as moderators of leadership that support other members in the organizations, to be engaged by developing future leadership that will continue with their legacy, by achieving sustainability and succession. This requires bringing together all stakeholders, all parts of the organization, and all aspects of all business functions by encompassing the entire culture of the business and the surrounding community (Tiller, 2012). Thus, PSFs’ integrated approach, to properly design their leadership sustainability and legacy, will allow for the appropriate decision making in strategic goals across their operations in existing and emerging markets (Levenson, 2014).

**Problem Statement**

Bialek (2014) explained the importance of leadership and its development as critical factors in the success of organizations, which makes them two of the top priorities for many PSFs. This is evident in the research, which has taken place over the past half a century, showing that effective leadership and its development will enhance organizations’ sustainability and performance (Bialek, 2014). According to Sahin (2011), recruitment development and
maintenance of key people are very important for PSFs’ success, due to the difficulty finding talented professionals, in most cases to fill the leadership positions in these organizations.

The problem addressed was the difficulties faced by a PSF, with operations in several metropolises in North America, to develop and retain leaders. The focus of the study was to analyze perceptions among leaders at various levels of the organization and to determine desirable leadership characteristics needed to develop a sufficient leader base for the organization sustainability in succession planning for decades to come.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the desirable leadership characteristics, based in leadership, organizational and implementing organizational change theories, needed in a professional services firm (PSF) with operations in several metropolises in North America. Thus, to achieve sustainable and legacy practical implications, which develop and retain organizational leaders, for the present and future of the organization.

**Nature of the Study**

Researchers use one of three standard research methods, qualitative, quantitative or mixed, when conducting their studies. Yin (2009) explained an approach, to help researchers in determining the design for a specific research method, which requires the understanding of three conditions as they apply to the research problem statement and research question: (a) the type of research question posed, (b) the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioral events, and (c) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events. Table 1 shows the relationship between the different design approaches in research methods and the three indicated conditions.
Table 1

Research Study Design Methods

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Method Design Approach</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>where?, how</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>many?, how</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival Analysis/Narrative</td>
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<td>where?, how</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>many?, how</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History/Ethnography</td>
<td>how?, why?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>how?, why?</td>
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This study used the qualitative research method with a case study design approach to obtain the data and information, from a consulting engineering PSF in the building industry with operations in several metropolises in North America, and addressed the problem of leadership development and retention. The case study design was used to explore and understand a real life phenomenon experienced in PSFs within their proper contextual conditions (Yin, 2009), by addressing the situation or specific problem or challenge (Stake, 1995).

The qualitative research method for this project followed a philosophical assumption, with a methodological approach that used an inductive logic, the study of the topic within its context, the work with details before generalization, the context of the study, and the revision of the problem question per the research instruments in the field (Creswell, 2013). The qualitative research method helped to better understand the problem of desirable leadership characteristics affecting leadership development and retention in the organization, thus generating the answers to the research question.

The qualitative research method could use different design approaches, such as narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study, which is the one used for this work, with different characteristics for implementing the process most suitable for research. The
narrative design explores a spoken or written account or the story of a specific or series of chronological events (Czarniawska, 2004). The phenomenology design explores a common meaning derived from individual lived experiences of a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The grounded theory design explores the generation or discovering of a theory grounded in participant data from those experiencing a process (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). The ethnography study explores, describes and interprets shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs and languages within a cultural sharing group (Harris, 1968). The case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real life context, thus this design approach was used in this study (Yin, 2009).

Other research methods used by researchers are the quantitative research method, which gathers measurements drawn from an aggregate of many individual observations and objective measurements, with aiming for understanding and an impersonal role of the researcher (Stake, 2010). It follows a fixed design, researchers’ views, narrowed picture researcher, bias absent, construed or laboratory setting, closed-ended data collection, deductive data analysis and highly structured writing. Furthermore, there is also a mixed research method that uses both quantitative and qualitative methods, techniques, approaches concepts and language into a single study. Based on the indicated characteristics for all these methods, this researcher found that both the qualitative and mixed research methods are not adequate for this dissertation (Creswell, 2016).

**Research Question**

The study explored the perceptions among leaders, at various levels of a professional services firm (PSF) in metropolises in North America, to determine desirable leadership characteristics needed to develop a sufficient leader base for the organization sustainability in
retention and succession planning in decades to come. The study followed a team approach with two key elements for the PSF: (a) top management commitment and (b) cultural transformation (Plenert, 2012). Thus, the following research question was addressed in this study:

- Which are the desirable leadership characteristics needed to retain and develop leaders in the organization?

**Conceptual Framework**

This study, in accordance with the problem statement, was focused on desirable leadership characteristics in PSFs with operations in North America metropolises, and it is based on research conducted in the field of academic study of leadership theories and practices. Thus the analysis and study of the several theories in leadership, which have been developing in the past several decades, took place. These theories are authentic leadership (AL), servant leadership (SL), and transformational leadership (TL), which were the ones considered and chosen as one to focus and use for this study.

There are two approaches in categorizing leadership theories, traits/skills based and process/behavior based. The trait/skill based approach describes the leader’s personal traits and skills such as personality, motives, values, and knowledge, as the way to measure leadership in an individual, while the process/behavior based approach emphasizes the interaction between the leader and the followers to measure successful leadership (Northouse, 2016; Yulk, 2010). This is in accordance with Bass (1990) who explained how leadership can be viewed from individuals’ traits/skills approach to make effective leadership possible, and process/behavior approach which is based and achieved in the leader fostering change and activity in the group that he/she influences.
Northouse (2016) defined leadership “as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 6). Thus, this definition fosters leadership becoming available to everyone, since it occurs with interactive events, between leaders and followers that affect them mutually. This study uses the process/behavior approach definition of leadership based on several components: (a) leadership is a process, (b) leadership involves influence, (c) leadership occurs in groups, and (d) leadership involves common goals (Northouse, 2016).

Upon establishing this study’s findings, there is an understanding of the desirable leadership characteristics in the authentic, servant, and transformational leadership theories, which provide insight to foster practical implications in organizational design and implementation organization change to manage PSFs more effectively. Thus, PSFs organizations could be helped to create their organizational infrastructure in the pursuit of effective and efficient actions by leaders, in support of strategic renewal for outstanding performance in the current global environment found in North American metropolises (Daft, 2013; Spector, 2013).

**Authentic Leadership Theory**

This theory was formulated from the need for authentic leadership that emphasizes the authenticity of leaders as a result of the early 2000s business failures of Enron and WorldCom. The events that took place with this economic crisis gave evidence to unethical and wrong behavior, by the leadership in these organizations, since their leaders pursued selfish and personal gain (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

Avolio and Gardner (2005), who developed the current definition of the authentic leadership theory, stated that authentic leadership contains different components from other
leadership theories to establish a pattern in leadership behavior, based on the leaders’ psychological qualities and strong ethics. These components are: (a) self-awareness, (b) internalized moral perspective, (c) balanced processing, and (d) relational transparency for how leaders work with individuals in organizations to foster self-development (Avolio, Gardner, Walumba, Luthans, & May, 2004).

The last component, relational transparency, has been found to be a true predictor of trust within leader-follower relationships (Wong & Laschinger, 2013). This is also confirmed by Luthans and Avolio (2003) who stated that an authentic leader is confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient moral/ethical, future-oriented, and gives priorities to developing associates to be leaders by being true to him/herself. Thus, leaders with these characteristics can develop qualities for the common good of the organization as they serve others, since they are perceived as trustworthy and believable.

The desirable leadership characteristics associated with this theory provide a platform that can help leaders in PSFs to lead with moralistic and honest behavior. The practical application of this leadership theory promotes an environment of open communication, with all individuals in the organizations, to give them a sense of importance, value, trustworthiness and proper citizen behavior, which ensures the development and retention of their leaders (Marques, 2015).

**Servant Leadership Theory**

Greenleaf (1977) used first the concept of *servant leadership* in his work “The Servant Leader.” The servant leadership concept puts serving the greater needs of others as the primary goal of leadership. Thus, it is defined as a leadership theory that emphasizes the leader’s responsibility to the success of the organization and all its stakeholders. This leadership
approach is fostered by leaders who sense a natural desire to serve and make a conscious
decision to lead by (a) valuing and developing people, (b) practicing authenticity in leadership,
(c) building community, (d) providing leadership for the good of followers, and (e) sharing status
and power for the common good of followers, the total organization, and persons served by the
organization (Greenleaf, 1977; Laub, 1999).

Servant leaders characterize themselves by first acknowledging their responsibility not only to the organization’s goals and the personal development of followers, but also to a wider range of organizational stakeholders, including the larger society. Second, servant leaders encourage followers to engage in moral reasoning (Graham, 1991). This is also in accordance with the perspective by Shek, Chung, and Leung (2015) who indicated that effective service leadership is a function of moral character, leadership competencies and a caring social disposition. Thus, they present a modern version of the service leadership definition, “…service leadership is about satisfying needs by consistently providing quality personal service to everyone that the leader comes into contact” (Shek et al., 2015, p. 271).

The servant leadership behavior promotes desirable leadership characteristics in PSFs since servant leaders are not concerned about their own personal advancement, but foster and pursue the well-being and needs, advancement, and autonomy of others who need guidance (Washington, Sutton, & Sauser, 2014). Servant leaders hold a foundation of mutual caring, trust, and sense of community that enable organizations to properly, effectively, and efficiently develop and retain the right individuals in their leadership group (Peterson, Galvin, & Lange, 2012).
Transformational Leadership Theory

Burns (1978) was the first scholar who described leadership as transforming and a quality, that “recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of potential followers” and transformational leadership as “a relation of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and convert leaders into moral agents” (p. 4). This theory is based on a movement that defines leadership as a process in which individuals engage, in a way that followers and leaders, to raise one another higher levels of motivation and morality (Burns, 1978). Another definition of transformational leadership is by Rost (1993) which states that leadership is “an influence relationship among leaders and collaborators who intend significant changes that reflect their mutual purposes” (p. 102).

Bass (1985) was also a pioneer in the development and research of the concept of transformational leadership. Bass (1985) described the behaviors that characterized transformational leaders as being a model of integrity and fairness, encouraging people and providing support and recognition, getting people to look beyond their self-interest, having high expectations, reach for higher goals, setting clear packs and stirring the emotions and passions of people. In addition, Bass (1985) identified several dimensions of transformational leadership: (a) idealized influence, (b) inspiration, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individual consideration. Other players in the development of the transformational leadership concept, Tichy and Devanna, outlined a three step process that transforming organizations follow: (a) revitalization (recognizing the need for change), (b) creating a new vision, and (c) institutionalizing change (Tichy & Devanna, 1986).

This theory encourages leaders to create a positive change in the followers, whereby they take care of each other’s interests and act in the interests of the group as a whole, to improve the
performance of organizations by developing individuals to their fullest (Warrillow, 2012). People who practice transformational leadership stimulate and inspire followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes and have values and ideals that support, the greater good of the organizations and their individuals, rather than their self-agenda and interests (Robbins & Coulter, 2007; Daft, 2013). The desirable characteristics in this leadership style are necessary to be part of the behavior in the PSFs’ leaders because they enable them to cope with the changes needed to face the problem of leadership development and retention in their organizations. These characteristics help leaders to become models, collaborate, clarify goals, and provide individual support, and promoting intellectual innovation (Marques, 2015).

**Organization Design and Implementing Organizational Change Theories**

Organizational design in PSFs requires the creation of a strong culture, with leaders having authentic, servant, and transformational desirable leadership characteristics in their organizations. Thus, these leaders can encourage adaptation and enhance performance, around align actions and strategic priorities founded in energizing and motivating employees, unifying people with shared goals and a higher mission by shaping and guiding behavior. This also requires the leadership in PSFs to foster a relationship with followers, based on proper values that are communicated to the organization and institutionalized, with behaviors that support them (Daft, 2013).

The desirable leadership characteristics are critical for the leadership development and retention of PSFs organizations. PSFs organizations leadership and management must provide the proper set of activities or behaviors, which prompt and mobilize the correct leadership behavior, on the part of members of the organization (Spector, 2013). Moynihan, Pandey, and Wright (2011) concluded that desirable leadership characteristics fostered by the leaders in an
organization have an influence on reform, policy implementation and other organizational outcomes using high-level focus on strategy and inspiring, thus affecting positively the retention and development of its leaders. These leaders must set the path of organizational success by fostering goal clarity and the development of a culture for the right organizational conditions (Moynihan et al., 2011). This furthers requires the top management to understand the diversity, required leadership characteristics and the social values of leaders, when communicating the benefits of adopting management practices (Waldman, 2011).

Edwards, Schedlitzki, Turnbull, and Gill (2015) presented a conceptual framework of the leadership and management that is used when implementing organizational theory and design that fosters desirable leadership characteristics for development and retention: (a) managers doing leadership is where management is seen as a function of a position of authority and leadership is seen as an asset of personal characteristics, (b) managers becoming leaders is where both management and leadership are conceptualized as functions of position of authority, (c) being managers and leaders is where both management and leadership are conceptualized as functions of personal characteristics, and (d) leaders doing management is where leadership is seen as a function of a position of authority and management is seen as a function of a set of personal characteristics.

**Definition of Terms**

There are several key terms that are drawn from the literature review and relevant to the understanding of this study.

*Authentic Leader* – “Someone who exhibits a behavior with self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balance processing of ideas and relational transparency” (Northouse, 2016).
**Good Leader** – Someone who fosters a culture of sustainability with legacy that develops and retains organizational leaders, for the present and future of the organization, by practicing authentic, servant, and transformational leadership behavior.

**Humble Person** - “Someone who develops the self-knowledge through an active, continuous disposition of self-examination regarding own actions and listening to others when receiving information about the self” (Argandona, 2015).

**Legacy Leadership** - “The process of teaching others to lead” (Whittington, Pitts, Kageler, & Goodwin, 2005).

**Professional Service Firms** - “Business organizations with professional services that are project oriented, take place over significant periods of time and required involvement with extensive investigation and problem solving” (Strumpf et al., 2002).

**Servant Leader** - “Person who has an attitude of service by being authentic, vulnerable, accepting, present and useful. Thus, places the good of followers over their own self-interest and emphasize follower development” (Boone & Makhani, 2002; Northouse, 2016).

**Shared Leadership** - “Acceptance one another as a leader as opposed to being self-empowered as a single leader” (Drescher, Korsgaard, Welpe, Picot, & Wogand, 2014).

**Transformational Leader** – “Someone who engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation in the leader and the follower” (Northouse, 2016).

**Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

**Assumptions**

This work assumed a non-bias and non-prejudice approach by the present leadership of the PSF from which the data were gathered for this study to the research instruments’ questions.
Thus, the researcher provided some explanation for the leaders’ understanding of desirable leadership characteristics concepts from the literature review during the interview.

**Limitations**

The work associated with this study was limited to desirable leadership characteristics, found in authentic, servant, and transformation leadership theories, as they relate to a consulting engineering PSF with operations in large metropolises in North America. As such, the findings may not apply to all PSFs in engineering or other professional service firms.

**Delimitations**

This study was not an attempt to produce an exhaustive explanation of all possible desirable leadership characteristics that can be applied in the development and retention of leaders in PSFs. It only considered and focused on the characteristics found in the authentic, servant, and transformational leadership theories to establish those that affect development and retention of leaders in PSFs, within the society and cultural context of North American metropolises in the first quarter of the 21st century.

**Significance of the Study**

**Reduction of Gaps**

This study analyzed the applicable authentic, servant, and transformational leadership theories, desirable leadership characteristics to address the problem associated with leaders’ development and retention in PSFs in North American metropolises. It provides some contributions in both the academic and business world in the areas of desirable leadership characteristics and their effect in leaders’ development and retention practices, which affect organizational design and the proper implementation of organizational change in PSFs organizations for their sustainability.
The executive leaders in PSFs need to know which leadership characteristics are desirable to implement the proper practical approaches and maintain their firms’ sustainability. Thus, regardless of how dynamic and knowledge intrusive the current global environment in PSFs is, it is necessary to support and create more innovative managerial routines with desirable leadership characteristics that are found to be beneficial for their organizations and leadership. This will ensure facing a constant changing business economy that requires implementing the needed philosophy and culture to achieve efficient and effective leadership development and retention in these organizations (Jensen, Poulfelt, & Krauss, 2010).

Implications for Biblical Integration

PSFs are in need to find desirable leadership characteristics to develop and retain their leaders, be sustainable and serve the community by providing goods and services that will enable these communities to flourish, and serve their employees, by providing them with opportunities to express their God given talents and abilities, in meaningful and creative work (Van Duzer, 2010). The Scriptures give examples of leaders that follow the behaviors found in the authentic, servant, and transformational leadership theories, thus understanding the biblical personalities who displayed desirable leadership characteristics, was relevant to this study.

Examples of these characteristics, based in principles found in the Scriptures, are to pursue the presence of God and follow the will of God (Romans 12:1-2), live in peace (2 Corinthians 5:11), live in Christ (Galatians 2:20-21), live and walk by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-26), live in the likeness of God (Ephesians 4:20-32), use the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-24), have the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:1-4), have the thoughts of Christ (Philippians 4:4-8), understand the will of God and use the time wisely (Ephesians 5:15-17), put the new self with the peace and word of Christ (Colossians 3:10-17), life a godly life with contentment (I Timothy...
6:6-19), handle the word of truth accurately (2 Timothy 2:15-17), have faith in order to please God (Hebrews 11:6), pursue peace with all men (Hebrews 12:14), show faith by works (James 2:14-16), not to love the world nor the things of the world (1 John 2:15-17) and not to forget His second coming and understood eternal life in His presence (Revelation 22:7).

The teachings found in these verses and passages are scriptural guidelines that can foster a leadership approach that is God centered when leaders serve others for his glory and honor. This means for the Christian leaders submitting to Christ, the head of the church, as servants in order to accomplish his work with the reality of living under the authority of the Word of God and the Spirit of God (Isaiah 6:1-6; Revelation 4:5-11; Romans 11:33-36; Matthew 28:19-20).

The biblical worldview for management and leadership to approach organizational theory and design, must take in consideration the following considerations: (a) think spiritually! Clear, biblical thinking must override secular planning to have an authentic, servant, and transformational leadership corporate mentality; (b) stay biblical! The study and accurate decisions must originate from God’s Word, not human opinions; and (c) be flexible! Wise, essential changes must occur to counteract any sign of erosion for non-good leadership practices (Baeza, 2014).

Authentic Leadership Theory

Several biblical personalities, like Abraham and Daniel, showed authentic leadership characteristics in the biblical narrative during their pilgrimage on Earth. Abraham and Daniel were authentic leaders who demonstrated qualities that were perceived as trustworthy and believable by those who followed them (Northouse, 2016). Abraham was God’s chosen to carry a critical role in the sovereign plan of redemption for humanity as stated in Genesis 18:19. Abraham genuine love and commitment to God, to follow the will of God was authentic, were
also shown in the lives of his son Isaac and grandson Jacob. The example of faith and obedience by Abraham, when he responded to God’s request for an acceptable offering, was followed by Isaac and Jacob in their heritage of obedience to follow and serve God (Eldridge, 1995). Abraham’s approach showed authentic leadership when he transmitted to his children in the direction to achieve goals, results, and change to encourage the pursuit of the presence and will of God with authenticity (Ducharme, 2004).

The prophet Daniel also showed authenticity, in his leadership behavior, when God called him during the time of the Babylonian exile for the people of Israel in the sixth century. He influenced with his example the kings of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, Nabodinus, Belshazzar and Cyrus, by giving them advice from God while he was holding prominent positions in the Babylonian administration. Daniel authentic leadership approach was based in his relationship with God, separation from impurity, courage against compromise, efficaciousness in prayer and dedication to God “whose Kingdom endures from generation to generation” (Daniel 14:34; Douglas & Tenney, 2011).

**Servant Leadership Theory**

There are many examples in the biblical narrative of personalities who followed the servant leadership characteristics such as Jesus and Paul. The servant leadership theory promotes the leader challenges not to follow a self-serving approach, which is contrary to the teachings of Christ, but to avoid the pursuit of addiction to power, recognition and being afraid of losing position. Jesus took the form of servant (Philippians 2:7) and demonstrated his servant heart when he washed the feet of his disciples (John 13:14-15). Furthermore, Jesus’ death on the cross was a radical expression of service and love (Philippians 2:6-11). These examples show the intent for servant leaders and all believers, to follow Christ’s example and to use the Word of
God when confronting temptations such as instant gratification, recognition and applause, improper use and lust for power, false pride and fear, and to hold lightly the things of the world (Blanchard & Hodges, 2003).

Paul viewed himself as a servant of Christ (Romans 1:1) and considered his apostleship as a call to service for the sake of Jesus, his church, and all people (1 Corinthians 9:19, 2 Corinthians 4:5). Kahl (2004) described several servant leadership biblically based characteristics, based on the examples of Jesus and Paul, such as character (credibility, integrity, values, self-respect and confidence), learning (acquiring the knowledge for success), creativity (crafting a vision they understand and are motivated to follow, drive (bring passion and energy), courage (taking risks and standing up to your fears), caring (care and motivate the team by understanding their needs), and discipline (keep the focus to execute and succeed).

Choi (2014) concluded that practicing servant leadership principles will help with the success in organizations at all levels with leader servants who draw people to God (p. 15). The servant leadership journey is transformational as Blanchard and Hodges (2003) described in the Lead like Jesus Transformational Leadership model. The model consists of Personal Leadership or inside perspective in accordance with Matthew 3:13-4:11, One to One Leadership or trust in accordance with Matthew 4:18-24, Team/Family Leadership or community/legacy in accordance with Matthew 10:5-10 and Organizational/Community Leadership or effectiveness/reconciliation in accordance with Matthew 28:19-20 (p. 20).

The servant leader model by Christ requires to exercise four leadership domains: heart, head, hands, and habits which will result in high levels of loyalty, trust and productivity when they are all aligned. In addition, the importance to exercise spiritual habits, to counter the negative forces in the leader’s life journey, such as solitude, prayer, studying and application of
Scripture, accepting and responding to God’s unconditional love and involvement in supporting Relationships (Blanchard & Hodges, 2008). Thus, a servant leader must exalt God only and follow the model set by Christ during his ministry on Earth (Coulter, 2003).

**Transformational Leadership Theory**

Jesus and Paul had a life changing impact during their ministry on Earth, and for generations to come after their departure, in the lives of their disciples. Their behavior fostered a transformational leadership approach. Jesus called his disciples to follow him to develop them in their full potential and become fishers of men (Matthew 4:19; 9:36-39). The early phase of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ ministry on Earth was directed to the multitudes as he sought out the people where they were. During the last year of his ministry, he influenced the lives of 12 disciples whom he has chosen (Douglas & Tenney, 2011), thus instruct them about himself and his mission with transformational leadership characteristics which prepare them for the part they will play in the life of the church after his ascension.

God used Paul to spread the Gospel of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, thus Paul planted churches in the strategic populations of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, Rome, Spain and others (Douglas & Tenney, 2011). He trained and coached strong Christian leaders, like Timothy, Titus, and Barnabas, and entrusted them to reach out to other men qualified to teach others and carry on the work after him (2 Timothy 2:2). Paul used transformational leadership characteristics, with associated effective goals and feedback, to help leading fellow believers to improve their self-regulatory abilities, personal development and performance (Gregory, Beck, & Carr, 2011).

Also, the apostle Paul described the leadership characteristics needed to sustain the church in I Timothy 3:1-13 following a biblical worldview with practical applications, based on
the fact that believers are called to follow the will of God for their lives in all work activities, and live by practicing the characteristics indicated by Christ in Matthew 5:1-12. Table 2 summarizes the transformational leadership characteristics displayed by Paul when empowering and nurturing Timothy (Cooper, 2005).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transformational Leadership Characteristics by Paul</th>
<th>Practical Implications</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence</td>
<td>Paul influenced Timothy with his understanding of God’s equipping of him for service, he identified with Timothy in his moment of weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiration</td>
<td>Paul inspired Timothy to remain faithful to the position in which God approved him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>Paul stimulated Timothy to correctly teach the word of God as well as to correctly understand his position before God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized Consideration</td>
<td>Paul exhibited personal concern for Timothy while he struggled through ministry; he coached Timothy through trials</td>
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The transformational influence of Paul, as a leader who was given the power of God in the Holy Spirit, was altruistic in love for others and morally uplifting to his followers. Thus, he provided a strong and positive vision for the good of others in their congregations’ environment (Whittington et al., 2005). Cooper (2005) also explained how this approach by Paul was exemplified in the transformed life of Timothy when he inspired him to move the church from the past, through the present, to the future.

Paul saw the importance to concentrate on developing solid relationships with those following the leader’s relationship with Christ and Scriptures (p. 59). Stowell (2014) summarized the transformational leader character-driven life, as shown by Paul during his ministry life, for kingdom success to magnify Christ: (a) prioritizing character of a follower of
Christ, (b) leading with moral authority, (c) leading as a shepherd, (d) leading as a servant, and (e) leading from the pure heart (p. 168).

**Relationship to Field of Study**

The leadership in PSFs must find and support a consistent approach to foster authentic, servant, and transformational leadership characteristics to achieve firm sustainability and success in the development and retention of leaders in their organizations (Joyce & Slocum, 2012). This study determined desirable leadership characteristics, thus relating to the field of leadership as it added knowledge concerning the application of authentic, servant, and transformational leadership theories’ leader characteristics in PSFs organizations.

**A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**

The field of leadership studies is a discipline devoted, as the name suggest, to the study of leadership theory and practice in different organizations. It is with this understanding that this study explored the desirable leadership characteristics to address the problem of leaders’ development and retention in PSFs. This literature review focused on leadership theory and practice literature related to authentic, servant, and transformation leadership theories. The understanding of the desirable leadership characteristics in PSFs and how to implement and manage them in these organizations, in their environment, size, complexity, conflicts, coordination and culture, within their design elements, dynamic processes and structure to achieve the organizational goals, was addressed.

It is necessary to understand the issues that PSFs face such as leadership development and retention, how to adapt in a changing business and social environment, coping with increasing size and complexity, managing internal conflict, and shaping and coordinating the right organizational culture that meets the organizational goals in determining desirable
leadership characteristics. This requires addressing inter unit coordination and resource sharing in the PSFs to offer the business models in accordance with the changing business environment. Thus, the importance of managers and company strategists to get involved in the alignment of relevant leadership theories and their applicable knowledge to management strategies (Merat & Bo, 2013).

This study gathered insight from scholarly peer review journals and dissertation thesis and research projects in the academic field of leadership as it pertains to the leadership environment in professional services firms: (a) authentic leadership desirable characteristics in professional services firms; (b) servant leadership desirable characteristics in professional services firms; (c) transformational leadership desirable characteristics in professional services firms; and (d) impact of leadership characteristics on leader development and retention in professional services firms.

**Leadership Environment in Professional Services Firms**

There is a consensus about scholars that PSFs are the most important firm type in our current business environment. These organizations services are characterized as knowledge based in which today’s society acknowledges that knowledge is critical as a competitive advantage for the organizations (Blecker & Feinberg, 1995; Grant, 1996; Zack, 1999; Jensen et al., 2010). PSFs require strong leadership implementing business strategies and plans to please their stakeholders and maintain a profit plan (Tiller, 2012). Thus, the understanding of the overall business environment, changes, and challenges in leadership practices helped in determining desirable leadership characteristics in these firms.

Furthermore, researchers concluded that a leadership framework based on establishing desirable characteristics in leaders can address several of the challenges in PSFs, beyond those
associated with development and retention of leaders, such as technological advancements, economic globalization, increased communications, the Internet, rising terrorism, environmental degradation, war and violence, disease and starvation, threat of global warming, intensifying gap between the poor and rich worldwide, and others during this constantly changing 21st century business environment (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Other findings in academic research concluded that the practical use of desirable leadership characteristics that change organizations had important practical implications for teambuilding by assisting work teams to become more effective in supporting performance management and coaching (Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2013; Duff, 2013).

**Overall Business Environment**

PSFs are flexible organizations with intangible operational inputs, which depend on building good relationships and trust with their clients, to increase perceived quality of their services and to sustain their successful performance. Examples of PSFs include accounting firms, advertising agencies, business consulting firms, computer firms, consulting engineering firms, law firms, and software firms (Nachum, 1996; Lowendahl, 2000). Also, PSFs are knowledge intensive with high cost of professional specialty, thus their professionals are autonomous, highly skilled and specialized. These organizations work environment requires their management to foster their employees’ proper skills and knowledge coordination, along with competence enhancement (Sahin, 2011).

Leaders in PSFs are also responsible for building and shaping their organizations and meeting all of their stakeholders’ expectations, while facing the new challenges of the first quarter of the 21st century, by making decisions that guide the purpose and direction they will follow. Thus, leaders in PSFs determine design, strategy and goals to adapt in a changing
environment, with effectiveness and efficiency based on the desired leadership characteristics that are required in leaders and managers (Daft, 2013). Miozzo, Lehrer, DiFillippi, Grimshaw, and Ordanini (2012) indicated that knowledge intensive business service firms such as PSFs, need managers and leaders who can respond to the market challenges and opportunities with the correct desirable leadership characteristics.

PSF organizations also provide customized services by highly skilled and professional people who are autonomous, empowered, and have a costumer oriented philosophy. The solutions they provide to their clients’ needs require the use of experience and knowledge gained in previous projects, thus PSFs need to employ well educated managers and employees, as well as use proper strategies for development and maintenance of their key people (Roberts, 2000; Lowendahl, 2000). This requires that their management strategies are fostering the recruiting of new professionals, developing projects, and maintaining relations with the clients within open systems that allow sharing these strategies with the employees while increasing their involvement (Sanchez & Heene, 1997; Van Bosh & Van Wijk, 2000; Freiling, 2004).

Kunc (2008) described how managing a professional services firm requires an approach with consideration of a proper balance between satisfying staff development and financial performance. This requires a work configuration in the organization in which senior staff are in charge of complex projects, with the support of junior professionals who perform simple tasks, and learn from the work of senior staff. PSFs performance is affected by imbalances between service capacity and demand. Kunc (2008) indicated some of the challenges that hinder the performance and sustainability of these firms are: (a) skill acquisition affects the long term performance of the firm, (b) fewer staff than required affects not achieving long term task, (c)
not hiring staff in advance, and (d) not understanding the actual growth rate and up-or-out policies to balance the structure and managing future growth rate.

The managerial approaches in PSFs focus on the knowledge embedded in their professionals, since these firms main resources are their human resources, who are responsible to produce, finish projects, solve cases and deliver to clients. This foundation of knowledge in these firms requires them to properly address issues such as (a) maintaining the knowledge base, (b) keeping the clients loyal, (c) managing human capital issues, (d) targeting the current market sector for the firms’ expertise, and (f) trust and control issues (Jensen et al., 2010).

Jensen et al.’s (2010) research indicated that PSFs managerial routines are based on the need to be flexible in accommodating to the clients’ requests and a high degree of billable hours for their team of consultants. Jensen et al. found the latter could lead to a work environment based on exploitation rather than exploration, due to the lack of emphasis on developing the knowledge skills of the professionals, beyond what is required for them to work on projects. Thus, managerial routines with this implementation can lead to the knowledge based being affected in the long term by reducing competitive and underutilization of the organizations’ capabilities and resources (Jensen et al., 2010).

The partnership form of PSFs is a complex scenario of governance and strongly held ideas of professionalism, day to day tasks and overall managerial approaches. Due to the current business environment in North American metropolises in which institutional and market pressures are experienced, these firms are managed professionally with characteristics of corporate style governance, greater functional and professional differentiation, introduction of formal control systems, more centralized and coordinating decision making, more elaborate
hierarchy, and separation of management and professional tasks (Lawrence, Malhotra, & Morris, 2012).

Based on the study by Kissi, Dainty, and Liu (2012), the impact and importance of the leadership approaches in PSFs were evident on organizational performance in general and innovation in particular, since these organizations are knowledge based firms in which leadership behavior and actions have a direct impact on the followers’ behavior and performance. Thus, leaders support in the creation of innovation encouraged a workplace that fosters innovative solutions to projects’ approaches and challenges (Kissi et al., 2012).

PSFs are successful when they foster an environment of high level of leadership collaboration, in which professionals engage in team work, with vigor, dedication, and absorption. Team vigor requires energy and willingness to put the effort in work, and the persistence to face challenges, team dedication is the strong involvement in work with a sense of challenge, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and significance, and team absorption is a shared and focused on work (Costa, Passos, & Bakker, 2014). These behaviors can be learned by following an open minded continuous approach, by the leaders in the organizations to assess their skills level and seek and accept constructive feedback, about their performance and have the willingness to make changes where and when necessary (Gillam & Siriwardena, 2013).

Changes and Challenges

PSFs leadership in today’s business environment is required to behave in ways that employees are comfortable to maintain communication lines, exchange ideas and be empowered to grow by taking ownership where needed. This approach requires the leaders to behave with flexibility, care, a sense of community, creativity, inspiration, facilitation and honesty (Marques, 2015). There are several shifts or factors that have affected the changes in how leaders are
expected to behave in different ways than their predecessors from the past century. Some of these changes are: (a) shifts in societal values requiring a bigger picture and collaboration (Marques, 2015), (b) shifts in investor focus with corporate reputation and ethics which are interested in the depth and quality of an organization’s leader (Higgs, 2003), (c) the ability to lead organizational change (Higgs, 2003), and (d) the influence of excessive stress on employees that requires leaders to respond with openness, support and compassion (Vardy, 2011).

Marques (2015) explained that leaders in the 21st century work environments are required to be visionaries, sensitive to the needs of stakeholders, work with their followers, empower employees, use strategies that include effective ways to produce cooperation, educated, independent in their thinking, have moral awareness and foster a communal approach. These characteristics are needed in PSFs, since they attract and develop unique individuals who are independent, autonomous and self-confident, so the organizations’ leadership can handle their managerial challenges effectively (Howard, 1991).

The services provided by PSFs are project oriented, problem solving, involve extensive investigation, and take place over a significant period of time. The complexity associated with these characteristics increases with the challenges faced by these firms. Thus, changes in the market for clients and talent, pressure to deliver more comprehensive and integrated services and, the technological revolution have prompted challenges in the quality control of service delivery, the development of institutional leaders, the maintenance of standards throughout the market cycles, focus on firm and long-term strategic issues among others (Strumpf et al., 2002).

PSFs are also assuming additional responsibilities for their employees requiring high involvement management, as moderators of leadership, in order to support the people in the organizations. This considers work taking up an ever increasing role in today’s society that
requires developing leaders that foster the employees’ commitment (Doucet et al., 2015).

Carmeli, Tishler, and Edmonson (2011) concluded that CEOs, COOs, CFOs, and others at the same level in PSFs can shape conditions of trust and facilitate processes for their leadership to learn from experiences of failure in order to improve the quality of strategic decisions for their organizations.

The leadership in PSFs ought to look finding proper coordination and balance in their respective organization structure by understanding the desirable leadership characteristics that help in providing the mechanisms for linking and coordinating organizational elements and a framework of responsibilities, reporting relationships and groupings into a coherent whole. This avoids management methods for leadership development and retention with misalignment in decision making, lack of innovation, poor employee performance, and excessive conflict (Daft, 2013).

Thus, it was important to consider several dimensions, when designing an organization’s internal and external design elements with leaders that exercise desirable leadership characteristics, within a successful organizational culture. These dimensions were: (a) principles to secure commitment to shared values; (b) developing staff and achieving results; (c) theories and frameworks; (d) structures; (e) personal and organizational behaviors; and (f) methods to achieve communication, objectives, finance, accounting, marketing, project management and quality assurance (Gillam & Siriwardema, 2013).

**Leadership Practices**

Laglera, Collado, and de Oca’s (2013) study focused on engineers, who are a population performing intellectual intensive work and tend to be more sensitive to leadership than those performing manual or administrative work, working in PSFs. Their findings showed that
business results associated with final outcomes, job performance, and organizational commitment are based on the job satisfaction experienced by the engineers working in their organizations. This required organizational leadership that improved management in engineering firms, by aligning objectives between the firms’ executives and their engineers (Lalera et al., 2013).

Engineers are known to lead in ways that are related, but not the same as the leadership practices found, in other professional groups in accordance with their expertise and core identity of applied scientist, service professional, team player, technical problem solver, task oriented doer and process optimizer. Thus, their leadership is understood to be influential, which in the case of engineers, is based on experientially gained technical insights, and building bridges across organizational units operationalizing their innovative ideas. These characteristics identify three engineering leadership orientations: (a) technical mastery, (b) collaborative organization, and (c) organizational innovation (Rottman, Sacks, & Reeve, 2015).

Rottman et al. (2015) analyzed how orientations of engineering leadership consists of leaders sharing well developed technical problem solving skills with their peers. This understanding fosters building a collaboration approach that optimizes operations and uses entrepreneurial thinking in order to bring technically sound ideas or organizational innovation in their projects and services (Rottman et al., 2015).

Staff turnover remains an issue for knowledge based organizations, thus it is important to create recruiting and retention strategies that target the talent needs that are relevant. This requires the proper management of the talented people, with the delegation of complex jobs and assignments to individuals with the capacity of handling them, in order to become a high performance organization. In addition, their leadership should evaluate if the current approaches
to talent management are affordable, delivering or not delivering, and missing opportunities (Coulson-Thomas, 2012).

PSFs exploit the knowledge bound to the people in their organizations, as the primary resource for creation of products and services, which is the reason for their competitive advantage. Merat and Bo (2012) found that knowledge based firms benefit from empowering leaders, who are more trusting to the employees by giving them autonomy, within a collaborative team climate that shares power and responsibilities. Thus, the participation by the firms’ members goes in accordance with knowledge management strategies that depend on the close collaboration and face to face sharing of knowledge between all stakeholders (Merat & Bo, 2012).

Nasrallah, Ouba, Yassina, and Srour (2015) concluded that leadership approaches in consulting engineering PSFs are affected by managerial skills, domain knowledge, and team performance in accordance with the time and effort needed to complete the conceptual to 100% documents in the engineering design projects. The leadership and managerial skills increased performance up to an optimal team size, thus leaders with high domain knowledge and people skills were always better for the team performance (Nasrallah et al., 2015). In addition, PSFs could benefit from leaders that are open to consider ideas from all members in their organizations, able to possess self-discipline, capable of displaying an outgoing behavior rather than reserved, compassionate and cooperative rather than suspicious or antagonistic, and have emotional stability (Conlin, 2016).

Leaders’ performance in PSFs is affected by credibility, which is based on their pursuit to influence perceptions of their competence, to serve their firms’ mission and their allegiance to the interests of their professional colleagues and subordinates. This requires that leaders exhibit
capability, expertise and respect with confidence to delegate complex and independent responsibilities to others (Leeds, 2012). Lounsbury, Sundstrom, Gibson, Loveland, and Drost’s (2016) study listed several characteristics that are important in leaders to foster firms’ performance: (a) assertiveness, (b) work drive, (c) agreeableness, (d) extraversion, (e) emotional stability, (f) optimism, (g) customer service orientation, and (h) conscientiousness (p. 447). In addition, a study by Hegarty and Cusack (2016) found that leaders in organizations, including PSFs, are expected to be patient and organized, communicate honestly, and trust followers in terms of their abilities and recognizing their work.

The approach to implement desirable leadership characteristics in PSFs requires to consider the continuous changes and evolution, of our contemporary society and global world environments. These organizations are affected by task and general environments that consists of sectors such as industry, raw materials, market, resources and international for the task environment and government, sociocultural economic, technology, and financial for the general environment. In addition to these sectors, organizations are affected in the international sector area by the dynamics produced in international economies, political and sociocultural events.

Therefore, the understanding and implementation of desirable leadership characteristics in PSFs can be challenging and more difficult for organizations when dealing with all these environments that are complex, multiple and interrelated, thus requiring a complex planning and design elements process of organizations and their structure (Daft, 2013). Planning and designing organizational elements using the proper desirable leadership characteristics has become a very critical part for organizations to be successful in dealing with the current 21st century changing and uncertain national and global environments.
Authentic Leadership Desirable Characteristics in Professional Service Firms

The theory of authentic leadership (AL) formulates that people have the capacity to become authentic in a lifelong learning process that can be developed over time. Thus, human resource departments in PSFs can practice AL inclusive forms of leadership that foster the desirable authentic leadership characteristics and behaviors in leaders (Daft, 2013; Peterson et al., 2012). Research findings have shown that when leaders are authentic and humble in their service by practicing desirable characteristics from AL, they recognize the gifts and talents of others and call them forth through empowering actions. This encourages individuals to respond and embrace the culture of PSF organizations by helping each other, taking initiative, participating in various activities, and also developing as potential leaders due to the given example to follow. Thus, individuals with desirable AL characteristics will infuse greater emotional health, wisdom, and legacy of service in their PSFs (Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 2008; Ebener & O’Connell, 2010; Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).

Several definitions of AL are found in the literature. Walumba, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, and Peterson (2008) defined it as

A pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster great self-awareness, an internal moralized perspective, balance processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of the leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development. (p. 94)

Whitehead’s (2009) definition of an authentic leader is of one who:

(1) is self-aware, humble, always seeking improvement, aware of those being led and looks out for the welfare of other; (2) fosters high degrees of trust by building an ethical
and moral framework; and (3) is committed to organizational success within the construct of social values. (p. 850)

Waite, McKinney, Smith-Glasgow, and Meloy (2014) explained how AL encourages the creation of meaning for everyone, leaders and followers, by the embracing of self-awareness and self-regulation. An authentic leader incorporates better engagement and expresses a deep sense of self in the performance of his or her position’s responsibilities and role (Murphy, 2012).

Several components were identified in AL: (a) self-awareness or the leaders understanding of their areas of improvement, beliefs, core values, sense of purpose and strengths which drive the leaders’ behavior; (b) unbiased balanced information processing or the leaders challenging and welcoming questions from others with the absence of self-protective responses; (c) authentic behavior/action or the leader total lack of concern pleasing others to attain honors, personal benefits and/or status and avoid repercussions and punishment from contenders; and (d) relational transparency or the leaders’ display of their genuine, uncensored and true self (Murphy, 2012; Laschinger, Wong, & Grau, 2012).

AL emphasizes the creation of a harmonious environment in organizations based on the authenticity that is congruent and overlaps all the goals and values of their leaders and followers (Neider & Schriesheim, 2011). Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) indicated how AL changes organizations’ dynamics in a positive way by fostering what is beautiful, good, important, and right, thus followers pursue achievement, self-actualization, higher moral maturity, and go beyond their self-interests. This requires the leaders’ authenticity to discover and express that what is meaningful and ethical, an expression of a higher aspiration or purpose, reflects on collective goals and develops self-awareness for authenticity (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012).
Leaders in organizations with AL characteristics reduce their biases, increase their self-awareness, and establish ethical and genuine relationships, thus implementing a work environment that promotes autonomy, control of decisions, and continuous and transparent communications to adapt sustainable organizational policies (Valsania, Moriano, & Molero, 2016). This is due to the patterns in the behavior by authentic leaders that achieve high expectations of sustainable performance over time as a result of the collaborative work environment in their organizations (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). The effective and efficient collaboration requires leaders to be: (a) proactive and future oriented, with a long term view and positive modeling, to develop this proactive attitude in their followers (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001); (b) share communication, knowledge, and generation of ideas to foster and express them freely, thus rejecting ideas when disagreement occurs until a better solution is found (Hisrich, 1990); and (c) foster an environment where workers know their direct supervisor trust them to perform due to the autonomy they have been given to in their responsibilities (Stull & Aram, 2010).

Valsania et al. (2016) concluded the behaviors of authentic leaders promote employees’ organizational identification and employees’ extra role behaviors at seeking innovative ways and opportunities to solve problems and challenges. This was also confirmed by Leroy, Anseel, Gardner, and Sels (2015) that explained how a positive AL relationship between leaders and followers emerges where the authenticity of both enhances the follower satisfaction of their needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness. There are many ethical and performance challenges in the current turbulent PSFs’ environment that require leaders to manifest behaviors of being honest and sincere with others, admitting mistakes, and telling others the truth to reflect the leaders’ personal values (Leroy et al., 2015).
AL desirable characteristics foster authentic relationships, which are open and transparent, between leaders and followers in organizations by being a model and behaving with an example that becomes apparent to the followers. This is a result of a leader-follower interaction with situation imperative and behavioral that can label leaders’ behavior as genuinely authentic (Cerne, Dimovski, Maric, Penger, & Skerlavaj, 2014). Semedo, Coelho, and Ribeiro’s (2016) study concluded that AL, affective commitment and job satisfaction, increase employees’ creativity and performance in knowledge based organizations. Thus, they suggested organizations to select leaders who show AL characteristics and features in addition to implementing training, coaching, and development.

Organizations are facing major challenges to retain the best talent in a highly competitive business environment. Leaders who follow the AL model make effort to incorporate beliefs, moral principles, and values that transmit motivation to employees as a means to give them encouragement and pursue collaboration that achieves their work objectives. The authentic leader establishes a relationship with others which is based on transparency, sharing, and objective analysis of the relevant information for proper decision making. These leaders act in a courteous way, cultivate their credibility, honest, respectful, trustful, thus creating an enhanced environment among their employees that fosters their creativity, commitment and respectfulness. AL leaders understand the importance of the quality of their relationship with the employees since this will determine the organization success (Semedo et al., 2016).

Cerne, Jaklic, and Skerlavaj (2013) found that fostering AL in organizations has a positive and great impact on individuals and team creativity, and innovation. The leading by example with sincere, open and transparent relations, and showing the leaders true self is seen by followers as the leader being authentic, which results in employees’ creativity and innovation
(Cerne et al., 2013). This requires the creation of a culture of inclusion by the organization in which leaders actively resist to diversity efforts, view and treat others as unique and different, engage individuals and teams in genuine dialogue and model appropriate behaviors (Wasserman & Gallegos, 2007). Thus, it is important that organizational leaders promote employee participation in the decision making processes and hire employees and leaders with AL characteristics such self-awareness, transparency, ethics, and processing of multiple perspectives to foster commitment, employee inclusion, organizational functioning, and self-esteem (Cottrill, Lopez, & Hoffman, 2013).

Shapira-Lishchinsky and Levy-Gazenfrantz (2015) concluded that AL characteristics displayed by leaders in organizations provide a meaningful and influential mentoring and leadership, thus strengthening the mentees as authentic leaders and encouraging them to adopt AL behaviors. This is achieved by AL mentors who as authentic leaders encourage constructive learning that is based on dialogue, inquiry, nurturing, and principles of dialogue which contribute to the development of AL strategies among the mentees (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Levy-Gazenfrantz, 2015).

Wang and Hsieh (2013) concluded that good organizations are looking for leaders who are able to create enduring organizations, have strong values and integrity, lead with purpose, and motivate their employees to provide better customer service. This requires organizations to (a) recognize AL develops behavioral consistency and integrity, sharing and delegation of control, competent communication and demonstration of concern; (b) link people, processes and the environment to improve the role of success; and (c) foster effective communication by leaders to build trusting relationship and show support for the employees through encouragement (Wang & Hsieh, 2013). Avolio et al. (2004) explained
Authentic leaders build benevolence and integrity with their followers by encouraging totally open communication, engaging their followers, sharing critical information, and sharing their perceptions and feelings about the people with whom they work; the result is a realistic social relationship, arising from follower heightened levels of personal and social identification. (p. 810)

Shek et al. (2015) identified the major propositions of authentic leadership as: (a) authentic leaders demonstrate leadership behaviors that are genuine and reflective on one’s personal values, (b) authentic leaders possess positive psychological capacities of confidence, optimism, hope and resilience, and (c) leadership is based on one’s self-concept and reliant on one’s level of self-awareness and ability to engage in self-reflection and regulation.

**Servant Leadership Desirable Characteristics in Professional Service Firms**

The term servant leader was defined by Greenleaf (1977)

The servant leader is one who is a servant first…it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The best test is: Do those served grow as persons; do they, while they are served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to be servants? And what is the effect on the least privilege in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?” (pp. 13-14)

There have been many interpretations to the servant leadership theory this concept addressing a wide range of behaviors. Spears (2004) indicated 10 characteristics which are quoted as being fundamental in SL. Boone and Makhni (2012) determined attitudes to help leaders in organizations achieve their goals. Van Dierendonck (2011) provided six characteristics
to give a good overview of servant leadership behavior experienced by followers. Parris and Peachy (2012) explained a seven servant to leader interaction model.

Spears (2004) identified ten characteristics of the servant leader: (a) listening, identifying, and clarifying the will of the group; (b) empathy, accepting, and recognizing the uniqueness of people; (c) healing, helping making whole those with whom they come in contact; (d) awareness, understanding self-awareness, strengths and issues involving ethics and values; (e) persuasion, convincing others rather than coerce compliance; (f) conceptualization, looking at situations with a wholesome perspective; (g) foresight, understanding the lessons from the past, realities of the present and likely consequence of a decision for the future; (h) stewardship, committing to serve the needs of others; (i) commitment to the growth of people; and (j) building community (p. 7).

Boone and Makhni (2012) determined the following attitudes to help leaders in organizations to achieve their goals: (a) believing that visioning is not everything, but it is the beginning; (b) listening is hard work requiring a major investment; (c) being a talent scout and committing to the staffs’ success; (d) sharing power; and (e) being a community builder. Van Dierendonck (2011) provided six characteristics to give a good overview of SL behavior’s experience by followers: (a) empowering and developing people, fostering a proactive and self-confident attitudes in others; (b) humility, putting one’s own accomplishments and talents in proper perspective; (c) authenticity, expressing oneself with a consistency in accordance with thoughts and feelings; (d) interpersonal acceptance, understanding and experiencing the feelings of others; (e) providing direction, ensuring that people know what is expecting from them; and (f) stewardship, being responsible for the good of the larger institution instead of control and self-interest.
SL promotes the leadership in organizations to follow a balance between leading and serving (Spears, 1996). Following are some of the desirable characteristics to be considered for leaders in PSFs in order to help in the leadership development and retention initiatives in the organizations: (a) empowering and developing people by encouraging self-directed decision making, information sharing and coaching for innovative performance; (b) humility by putting one’s accomplishments and talents in a proper perspective; (c) authenticity by expressing oneself in ways that is consistent with inner thoughts and feelings; (d) interpersonal acceptance by understanding the feelings and behavior of others; (e) providing direction to ensure that people know the expectations; (f) stewardship to take responsibility for the institution to go for service instead of control and self-interest; (g) the balance of professional will and personal humility when leading others; and (h) attitudes of vision, listening, being a talent scout, give away power and are a community builder for the organization and its people (Kahl, 2004).

SL provides a philosophical approach of caring and nurturing others to their full potential, with a set of desirable characteristics and behaviors that individuals in PSFs can learn and develop. This requires that these organizations select people who are interested in and capable of building long term relations with followers and have high integrity and ethics. Furthermore, the need to develop training programs helping leaders develop their emotional intelligence, ethical decision making and skills for empowering others (Daft, 2013).

Guillon and Cezanne (2014) explained the SL theory fosters employee loyalty as an attitude towards attachment, commitment, identification, or trust for the organization. Loyalty in organizations is a fundamental concern affecting leadership retention, since employees’ dedication, emotional investment, and commitment to the organization are important to the organization’s performance (Guillon & Cezanne, 2014). Thus, leaders can affect the
stakeholders in their organizations when: (a) considering their followers to be important, (b) encouraging diverse perspectives in their approach, (c) building an open, inclusive and diverse internal culture, (d) fostering strong ties with external stakeholder, and (e) managing cross cultural boundaries (Doh & Quigley, 2014).

Servant leaders contribute and improve the well-being of followers in organizations. They provide the needed values for ethical grounding and leadership framework required to face 21st century challenges that affect the current national and international business environments, such as disease and starvation, economic globalization, environmental degradation, increased communications, Internet, terrorism, violence, war and others, that affect either directly or indirectly organizations. Parris and Peachy (2012) explained the seven servant to leader interaction model consisting in applying seven values: (a) being teachable, (b) creating a place where peace grows within the organization, (c) demonstrating discipline, (d) meeting the needs of the followers, (e) seeking the greatest good for the organization, (f) shows concern for others, and (g) showing mercy in actions and beliefs with all people.

Research findings concluded that there are characteristics, behaviors, or life experiences that predict a servant leader in an organization. These are (a) an altruistic mindset, (b) influencing others through building trusting relationship, (c) experiencing servant leadership behaviors which become more frequent with the longevity of the leader in a leadership role, and (d) volunteering at least one hour per week demonstrating higher servant leader behaviors (Beck, 2014).

This understanding was in accordance with the work by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) who identified the servant leaders behavior as altruistic or with a deep rooted desire that makes a positive difference in others’ lives, emotional healing or commitment and skill in fostering
spiritual recovery from hardship or trauma, wisdom or a combination of awareness of the surroundings with anticipation of consequences, persuasive mapping or an ability to influence others using sound reasoning and mental frameworks to conceptualize greater possibilities, and organizational stewardship or an ethic in taking responsibility for the well-being of the organization/community.

Sendjaya et al. (2008) identified more than 20 servant leadership characteristics categorized in six areas of behavior: voluntary subordination or being a servant than just merely doing acts of service, authentic self or being accountable and vulnerable to others with the absence of self-defensiveness when criticized, covenantal relationship or accepting others for who they are, responsible morality or using means in their actions that are ethically justified, transcendental spirituality or engaging in meaningful and intrinsically motivating work, and transforming influence. These areas and their associated characteristics are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Servant Leadership Areas of Behavior</th>
<th>Being a servant and acts of service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary subordination</td>
<td>Being a servant and acts of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic self</td>
<td>Humility, integrity, accountability, security and vulnerability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covenantal relationship</td>
<td>Acceptance, availability, equality and collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible morality</td>
<td>Moral reasoning and action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcendental spirituality</td>
<td>Religiousness, interconnectedness, sense of missing and wholeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transforming influence</td>
<td>Vision, modeling, mentoring, trust and empowerment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Leaders with foresight in PSFs understand the continuity of their organizations, thus adopt a strategic view with a future generations’ perspective. Leadership practicing stewardship principles influence and partner with others to act in common interest (Van Dierendock, 2011). Peterlin, Pearse, and Dimovski (2015) described the importance of servant leadership in strategic
decision making for sustainable organizations, which require exercising desirable characteristics in a multiple stakeholder contexts for the long term common good, consisting of foresight, stewardship and healing. Leaders practicing this approach served in a manner that helps them deal with followers’ personal pain, rejection and brokenness (Daft, 2013).

PSFs affective team commitment and effectiveness are influenced by the practice of servant leadership principles since team members, who perceive their leaders are about their wellness, will become more committed to their teams. Servant leadership fosters the development of teams by inspiring and creating moral confidence in their members, thus creating an environment of collaboration in the achievement of organizational goals (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

The organizations’ members become committed and attached to the team with a long term orientation and intentions to remain within the group (Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2013). This is in accordance with some of the findings in the study by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) who identified the importance of stewardship by employees and wisdom by leaders as characteristics that foster commitment in organization to achieve sustainability.

Zhao, Liu, and Gao (2015) study concluded that servant leadership promotes in organizations: (a) positive behaviors and reduces their turnover intentions; (b) elicit their integrated self, encompassing role, relational and organizational identity; and (c) consider their emotional experience in the relationship with the leaders. The practice of servant leadership desirable characteristics promotes knowledge sharing climate and team performance, thus the need to empower leaders who exhibit them, to lead the organization (Oliveira & Ferreira, 2012). Liden, Wayne, Liao, and Meuser (2014) confirmed that “no other leadership approach stresses
the notion of propagating the leaders’ behavior through followers as does servant leadership” (p. 1434).

PSFs sustainability requires for their leaders to display servant leadership characteristics that foster commitment by all members in these organizations. Thus, Ferdman (2013) identified how this behavioral approach creates an inclusive culture, engagements and dialogue, bringing individual’s true self work, fostering transparent decision-making, and communicating how inclusion relates to mission and vision. Thus, helping to meet and address the current diverse workforces present in these organizations (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016).

Liden et al. (2014) concluded that servant leadership desirable characteristics are exhibited by professionals when they contextualize themselves as leaders, managers, and professionals. These characteristics, which exhibited altruism or righteousness, were required for the good of the firm by their managers and professionals (Liden et al., 2014). This also included the need for these characteristics to be part of the CEOs leadership make up, since it was critical to select the right type of leaders to foster and promote leadership values, as well as to recruit, retain, and integrate employees and stakeholders who identified with these values (Peterson et al., 2012).

Peterson et al. (2012) found that CEOs improve their firms’ performance, when practicing servant-leadership characteristics to include a broader number of stakeholders, by empowering knowledge workers in PSFs to reach their full potential and feel engaged in a greater cause to benefit a wide range of stakeholders. Organizations are seeking leaders that emphasize ethics and a concern for all stakeholders affected by their organizations (Van Dierendock, 2011).
This is in accordance with the approach by servant leaders who acknowledge their responsibility to the organization’s goals, the personal development of their followers and wider range of stakeholders, including the larger of society. In addition, servant leaders add a moral dimension which helps their followers to engage in moral reasoning (Peterson et al., 2012). Servant leaders abandon their personal rights, from their personal belief to alter other individuals with moral boldness and spiritual comprehension into what they are competent or becoming, so they can successfully assist other individuals in the organization with the intention to give a foundation for their behavior to be practiced by their followers (Ljungholm, 2016).

Shek et al. (2015) identified the major propositions of servant leadership as: (a) servant leadership occurs when leaders assume the role of servants in their relationship with followers, (b) leadership behaviors are motivated by leaders’ inherent drive to serve, and (c) the value to transcendence motivates leaders to place needs of followers above one’s self interest. Servant leaders exhibit traits of humility, as part of their desirable servant leadership characteristics that manifest in their managers’ life and profession, with ethics and virtues that help organizations to be profitable and respectful.

The author of “Don Quixote” stated that humility “is the foundation of all virtues, and without it no other virtue can exist,” thus humility does play a significant role in the decision making process when considering that leaders will exhibit self-knowledge, character stability, capacity for improvement, and team work (Argandona, 2015). This is in accordance with Ebener and O’Connell (2010) who concluded that servant leaders are more inclined to serve, recognize, and empower others rather than to serve, recognize, and control their followers, thus helping to understand these followers to respond with organizational behaviors which will develop them as potential leaders.
Research findings showed when leaders behaved in humble service to the organization, recognized the gifts and talents of others, and called them forth through empowering actions, then the people gave a response that embraced the culture of the organization by helping each other, taking initiative, participating in various activities, and developed as potential leaders. Thus, individuals with servant leadership characteristics infused greater emotional health, wisdom, and legacy of service in their organizations (Sendjaya et al., 2008; Ebener & O’Connell, 2010; Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).

Beck (2014) concluded that servant leadership training programs in organizations benefited by encouraging leaders to find areas of service in accordance with their individual sense of purpose, calling, or desire to give back with an emphasis in ethical training and conduct. The servant leadership framework addressed the challenges of technological advancements, economic globalization, increased communications, the Internet, rising terrorism, environmental degradation, war and violence, disease and starvation, threat of global warming, intensifying gap between the poor and rich worldwide, and others in this twenty first century (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Other findings in academic research concluded the use of servant leadership and affective commitment had important implications for teambuilding, thus it assisted work teams to become more effective. Servant leadership was the most effective leadership approach to support performance management coaching for teams (Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2013; Duff, 2013). Servant leadership research provided evidence that people with servant leaders as managers exhibited higher levels of customers’ orientation and engage in adaptive behavior and extra role performance (Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, & Roberts, 2009).
Transformational Leadership Desirable Characteristics in Professional Service Firms

Transformational leadership (TL) is a leadership approach that creates positive change in the followers to take care of each other interests and act in the interest of the organization as a whole (Warrilow, 2012). Thus, a transformational leader is a person who stimulates and inspires followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes (Robins & Coulter, 2007). There are four characteristic or components of the TL style that are displayed by leaders:

(1) idealized influence or charisma, leading with a clear set of values and acting as a role model for followers, or providing vision and sense of mission by instilling pride, gain, respect, and trust;

(2) inspirational motivation, leading with optimism for current and future tasks, or communicating high expectations by using important purposes in simple ways;

(3) intellectual stimulation, promoting intelligence, rationality and careful problem solving; and

(4) personal and individual attention, giving personal attention, coaching and advising for each employee (Warrilow, 2012; Gyensare, Anku-Tsede, Sanda, & Oktopi, 2016; Cho & Dansereau, 2010).

TL is key to provide a dynamic environment in organizations which develops an internal business capability for employees to react positively, due to their job satisfaction, to needed changes affecting efficiency and efficacy (Yang & Islam, 2012).

Ghasabeh, Soosay, and Reaiche (2015) concluded that TL leaders enhance organizations performance by empowering their people and enabling needed change. This was in accordance with Tims, Bakker, and Xanthopoulou (2011) who showed that transformational leadership helped to increase the self-efficacy and engagement of employees in organizations by changing
the employees’ personal skills and resources. TL desirable characteristics taught to people at all levels in PSFs affected their performance and sustainability, recruitment, selection and promotion, training and development, improving team development, decision making groups, quality initiatives and reorganizations (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Beck (2014) concluded that pursuing desirable transformational leadership characteristics in organizations will encourage leaders finding areas of service in accordance with their individual sense of purpose, calling or desire to give back with emphasis in ethical training and conduct.

Transformational leaders can communicate effectively, thus creating a sense of ownership, inventiveness and a dynamic work environment among their followers with share responsibility to attain organizational goals and the individuals’ aspirations and needs (Dartey-Baah, 2015). This requires these leaders to analyze behaviors and actions in their organizations, by considering internal and external causes to others’ behaviors, that promotes cohesiveness (Sun & Anderson, 2012). In addition, PSFs’ transformational leaders competences include their ability to communicate interpersonally, adjust to the cultural background of their members, adjust to different social systems, establish interpersonal relationships, and understand others for an environment with leaders that are viewed as charismatic, team-oriented, participative, and humane (Gandolfi, 2012).

Soane, Butler, and Stanton (2015) concluded that TL and leadership effectiveness were affected by the members’ personality and their associated perceptions about the leaders for cooperation and agreeableness in organizations. Thus, the development of leadership teams in which leaders with vision and charisma work together in communicating and articulating the vision to the organization, make it attractive to the leaders to develop charismatic attributes (Khatri, Templer, & Budhwar, 2012). Kovjanic, Schuh, Jonas, Quaquebeke, and Van Dick’s
(2012) findings suggested that TL is the way to positively address employees’ job satisfaction, self-efficacy and commitment to their leaders in organizations when their basic psychological needs are satisfied.

PSFs experience constant organizational change that requires appropriate leadership behaviors for effectiveness and efficiency. Transformational leaders can be equipped to foster the need for change, create and share a compelling vision with all stakeholders, guide through adaptation, and provide the inspiration to achieve the changes in accordance with the goal for these organizations. Thus, the need for these organizations to develop these leaders and address the turbulent context in their work by utilizing TL to facilitate the development of high quality relationships with individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation (Carter, Armenakis, Field, & Mossholder, 2013). This is in accordance with Hassan, Bashir, Abrar, Baig, and Zubair (2015) who concluded that TL behavior of leaders’ increases self-beliefs of employees regarding creativity and innovation to address organizational changes. PSFs are knowledge based organizations which are in need of transformational leaders to influence the organizations creativity and innovation in ways that mediate and moderate behaviors at the individual, group, organization and external environment levels (Hu, Gu, & Chen, 2012).

Organizations, such as PSFs that foster TL desirable characteristics, can inspire and motivate followers to be engaged, and create effective training and coaching interventions for their leadership. This approach requires the need to monitor and support the leaders’ psychological reactions during the developmental interventions to support TL behaviors in the organization (Mason, Griffin, & Parker, 2014). These leadership behaviors also include openness to and appreciating employees’ ideas, emphasizing and recognizing feelings, giving
and receiving information on a project and avoiding micromanagement, thus creating a transformational team culture in which the members motivate, reward and intellectually stimulate each other and raise performance level with quality or quantity of innovations (Uusi-Kakkuri, Brandt, & Kultalahti, 2016).

Warrick (2011) described a set of recommended guidelines in designing programs for developing transformational leaders:

(1) assure top level support and involvement;

(2) appoint a design team to plan training the training and develop a TL model to be used in the training;

(3) view the program design as an intervention and not an event;

(4) make sure the program is designed to change the way people think and provide opportunities to practice new behaviors and develop new habits;

(5) plan follow up actions to apply what has been learned;

(6) provide coaching and help in applying course; and

(7) evaluate and improve the process and plan future actions (p. 17).

Table 4 shows a summary of transformational leadership characteristics and the researchers or authors that supported them.
Table 4

Transformational Leadership Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transformational Leadership Characteristics</th>
<th>Sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empower and motivate people and teams to excel</td>
<td>Bass (1985), Bass (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage innovative thinking and new ways of seeing things</td>
<td>Bass (1985), Bass (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excel at emotional intelligence skills</td>
<td>Fitzgerald and Schutte (2010), Polychroniou and Panagiotis (2009), Simosi and Xenikuo (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve and engage people at all levels</td>
<td>Pawar and Eastman (1997)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shek et al. (2015) identified the major propositions of transformational leadership as: (a) leadership is conceptualized as an influential process that enables and empowers followers to perform in ways that exceed expectations and become leaders ultimately, and (b) transformational leadership is achieved through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and demonstration of individualized consideration for followers.

Impact of Leadership Characteristics on Leader Development and Retention in Professional Service Firms

Over the past decades PSFs have used interventions and practices to promote constructive attitudes and behaviors among the people in their organizations (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015). This concurs with Seibert, Wang, and Courtright (2011) who concluded that “empowerment is
an effective approach for improving employee attitudes and work behaviors” (p. 995).

Knowledge based organizations that fostered employees’ autonomy and self-leadership were able to achieve a creative and satisfied workforce that translates into job satisfaction, work effort, and creativity (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015). Cho and Park (2011) concluded that goal clarity and autonomy are antecedents of trust that are required in the organizations’ leadership to foster employees’ satisfaction and commitment. Thus, the leadership’ understanding of the employees’ goals, in all areas including their development, was required to be congruent with their support of the organization (Maurer & Lippstreu, 2008).

Leadership retention and development are top priorities in PSFs since effective leadership gives sustainable competitive advantage to the organization (Yulk, 2010). This is important considering the rapid globalization and change in workforce demographics which many times lead to promote employees into managerial and leadership roles earlier in their careers (Bunker, Kram, & Ting, 2002; Cappelli & Hamori, 2005). This concurs with Kesler (2002) who explained the talent “could be identified relatively early in the executive career, and development could be accelerated through planned intervention” (p. 33). Organizations are facing challenges attracting, motivating, developing and retaining leaders to have the right talent in place. Thus, the importance for the organizations to properly identify high potential employees, with desirable leadership characteristics, who will not be arrogant and complacent (Bialek, 2014).

Taylor (2013) explained the importance of the leadership in PSFs to foster learning as a method to help and shape their organizations, thus leaders needed to motivate and encourage learning by providing tools and opportunities to be active goal setters and visionaries. This required leaders to shift power relations, and their understanding of all the leadership groups’ synergies, to support all individuals and promote the needed dialogue in the process (Blakeley &
Higgs, 2014). Woodman (2014) described how leaders require to exercise a general and specific capacity to change, adapt, and create to address their firms’ needs for innovation and sustainability. Thus, organizations benefited from recruiting and/or develop individuals who possessed more of the authentic, servant, and transformation leadership characteristics and behaviors (Beck, 2014).

Bond and Seneque (2013) described efforts in organizations to inspire learning and development in leaders with professional coaching to provide them with directive or non-directive professional advice, assisted on specific goals or personal transformation, and helped for therapeutic purposes or improve performance. The coaching process was intended to help leaders in accessing and deploying their leadership qualities and reach meaningful goals (Lloyd, 2005).

Perkins (2009) explained how a firm success is related by its top management leaders’ abilities to lead team meetings, which required an understanding in leading the diversity among their team’s members due to their level of knowledge and cultural background. These firms developed leadership programs helping their leaders empathize with those who were led by them that included programs for culture building workshops and projects, emotionally intelligent teams, coaching for intentional change, empathy training, and developing emotional intelligence in leaders (Boyatzis, Smith, Van Oosten, & Woolford, 2013).

Researchers found that knowledge based organizations’ approach to leadership that allowed their people to engage, interact, and learn from each other’s capability to improve performance took place by a leadership that fostered an environment where all members could take charge and defer responsibilities between each other with accountability, communication, influencing, and giving suggestions for problem solving and process improvement (Drescher et
al., 2014). This is also known as shared leadership which Pearce and Conger (2003) described as “a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals” (p. 1). Grille, Schulte, and Kauffeld (2015) concluded that shared leadership depends on the extent to which each team member is empowered, the perception by all team’s member is equally rewarded by the contribution of others and the leadership in the organization influences the shared leadership behavior.

Guillon and Cezanne (2014) explained employee loyalty as an attitude towards attachment, commitment, identification, or trust for the organization. Loyalty in organizations is a fundamental concern affecting leadership retention, since employees’ dedication, emotional investment, and commitment to the organization, are important to the organization’s performance (Guillon & Cezanne, 2014). Thus, leaders affect the stakeholders in their organizations when: (a) considering their followers to be important, (b) encouraging diverse perspectives in their approach, (c) building an open, inclusive and diverse internal culture, (d) fostering strong ties with external stakeholder, and (e) managing cross cultural boundaries (Doh & Quigley, 2014).

There is a need to advocate credible leadership that is built on a strong foundation of integrity fostering authentic, servant, and transformational characteristics with leaders who demonstrate: resilience, boldness in the face of opposition, dare to be vulnerable and transparent, are not afraid to show compassion and emotion, handle their followers on them delicately, use referent power, and are genuinely concerned about the well-being of their followers, thus they take notice and are attracted, committed, and changed to be productive members of their organizations (Whittington et al., 2005).
Whittington et al. (2005) described how the leadership with legacy in organizations includes principles of authentic, transformational and servant leadership with qualities such as (a) worthy of imitation; (b) boldness and opposition; (c) pure motive; (d) influence without asserting authority; (e) affectionate and emotional; (f) vulnerable and transparent; (g) authentic and sincere; (h) active, not passive; (i) follower centered, not self-centered; and (j) changed lives. This approach incorporated the ideas of empowerment, team building, participatory management, and the ethics necessary for the promotion of team commitment and effectiveness (Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2013).

Miozzo et al. (2012) concurred with the importance that knowledge intensive business service firms such as PSFs, need managers, and leaders with desirable leadership characteristics that can respond to the market opportunities with the proper organizational theory and design. This requires to address inter unit coordination and resource sharing in the firm to offer the business models with the right leadership in accordance with the changing environment (Miozzo et al., 2012). Thus, the importance of managers and company strategists to get involved in the alignment of their relevant leadership systems to foster knowledge management strategies successfully (Merat & Bo, 2012).

PSFs’ leaders are responsible in building and shaping organizations that meet their stakeholders’ expectations while facing today new challenges. These leaders are the decision makers that establish the purpose and direction an organization will follow, thus they determine by having authentic, servant, and transformational leadership characteristics, its design, strategy, and goals in order to adapt to a changing environment with effectiveness and efficiency. The required leaders’ methods will include addressing issues such as how to adapt in a changing business and social environment, coping with increasing size and complexity, managing internal
conflict, and shaping and coordination the right organizational culture that meets the organizational goals (Daft, 2013).

PSFs need to build a strong culture to energize and motivate employees, unify people around shared goals and a higher mission, and shape and guide behaviors from the organizations’ stakeholders to be aligned with the organization strategic priorities with values that include: (a) the whole is more important than the parts, (b) equality and trust are primary values, and (c) the culture encourages risk taking change and implementation (Daft, 2013). This further requires the leadership to create a management system in the organization to be designed, by providing a balance among the stakeholders’ needs and organization well-being (Tiller, 2012) and promoting a sustainable approach, for empowerment and self-leadership (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015).

Authentic, servant, and transformational leadership helps organization’s members to feel personally empowered, be fairly rewarded by their contributions, and influence them to perform to their utmost of their capacity (Grille et al., 2015). As an example, PSFs show their engineering leadership identity by contributing to society with technical skills, vision, insight and leadership capacity addressing crumbling infrastructure, building global communication networks and generating environmentally sustainable energy systems at the local, state, federal and global levels (Rottmann et al., 2014).

PSFs are required to develop programs and policies that leverage leaders’ desirable leadership characteristics and their talent in the organization to align them with organizational competencies and at executing organizational strategy, thus increasing centrality of people to organizational success, focus on whole systems and integrated solutions, strategic alignment and impact in capacity for sustainability (Ruona & Gibson, 2004). This leadership approach will promote an organizational positive environment by the employees with attitudes that foster: (a)
having confidence to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (b) making positive attribution about succeeding now and in the future; (c) persevering toward goals, and when necessary, redirecting paths to goals in order to succeed; and (d) when beget by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back even beyond to attain success (Luthans, 2012).

Fostering the correct desirable leadership characteristics in the organization’s leaders will ensure the firm’s employees contribute to achieve the business goals and to avoid organizational stagnation to continue and develop effective development and retention of leaders (Blackman & Lee-Kelley, 2006). The development and retention of leaders by fostering desirable leadership characteristics requires the organizations to be designed by providing a balance among the stakeholders’ needs and organizational well-being.

**Transition and Summary**

This section provides the information that establishes the foundation for this study in order to proceed with the project means and methods that explore the leadership characteristics, based in leadership, organizational and implementing organizational change theories, needed in a professional services firm (PSF) located in North American metropolises, thus providing sustainable and legacy practical implications to develop and retain organizational leaders for the present and future of the organization. The next section describes this study’s project.
Section 2: The Project

This section addresses the study’s project means and methods, to obtain information that establishes desirable leadership characteristics in PSFs, by applying the qualitative research method with a case study design. It includes the purpose statement, role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, data collection, data analysis and technique, and reliability and validity. The intent is for this qualitative case study to be a contributor to research in the field of leadership theory as it applies to desirable leadership characteristics, and their practical implications for leadership retention and development, in PSFs in North America metropolises. This concurs with Yin (2009) that described the characteristics of a case study are to be significant, complete, considering alternative perspectives, displaying sufficient evidence and be composed engagingly manner, as it is in this research project.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the desirable leadership characteristics, based on leadership, organizational and implementing organizational change theories, needed in a professional services firm (PSF) with operations in several metropolises in North America. This is to achieve sustainability and legacy practical implications, which develop and retain organizational leaders, for the present and future of the organization.

Role of the Researcher

Stake (1995) explained that a researcher is required to maintain vigorous interpretation by recording the data objectively, examining its meaning simultaneously and redirecting the observations to substantiate its meaning. The interpretations of the researcher are emphasized more than those of the people studied since they need to preserve the different realities that could include different and contradictory views (Stake, 1995).
The researcher used experience and personal judgment as the main basis for assertions about how the problem of the study was understood. This was to convey that the interpretation of the study is trustworthy when explaining the data in experiential terms, showing the complexity of the study’s background, and treating all people who participated as unique yet in ways similar to other individuals. The researcher interpretations were contributions with personal, logical, contemplative, and speculative and aesthetics characteristics for the study’s reader to understand the work accordingly (Stake, 2010).

Yin (2009) described how the researcher role requires to applying attributes for the researcher to properly perform his role. These attributes are: (a) asking good questions and interpreting the answers, (b) being a good listener who is not trapped in ideologies or preconceptions, (c) having a firm grasp of the issues being studied, and (d) being unbiased by preconceived notions (Yin, 2009). The data gathering and organization used the foundation of the study information to create the questions for the interview instrument. The researcher made phone calls to recruit participants, sent the consent form upon their acceptance, conducted the interview using go to meeting, created the transcript for each interview and sent it to the participant for review and feedback, reviewed all the documents to determine desirable leadership characteristics needed to develop and retain leaders in a PSF. Lastly, the researcher compared and tabulated the characteristics from the research with those in the authentic, servant, and transformational leadership theories.

Participants

The participants of the study were employees who were leaders or emerging leaders in a PSF organization in which the researcher has been a leader in this organization since 2007. This situation and the associated circumstances gave the researcher access to them, because of
established working relationships that had been developed throughout the years in the organization.

The leaders and emerging leaders, who were selected as prospective participants from this PSF, were contacted via a phone call for a conversation to provide them with an explanation about the study and the request for their approval to participate. Following the phone conversation, the recruitment letter and the informed consent document were sent to the prospective participants to formalize their acceptance to be part in the study. The leaders and emerging leaders, who had the desire to participate, proceeded to send the signed consent document back to the researcher to schedule the day and time for the interview.

The interview with each participant was conducted using a go to meeting, between the researcher and the participant, from their private offices with no other person(s) allowed to participate or be present during the interview. The researcher was the only one to have access to the data collected during the interview process, such as study notes, interview recordings and interview documents. The data were stored in a password protected computer and will be destroyed after three (3) years to the day the information was collected. In addition, the participant confidentiality was protected by not utilizing their names in the study or its documentation, thus the risks involved in this study are minimal for the participant, with no more than would be experienced in daily life. This study research approach included ethical practices of respect for the participant and the protection of a study participant’s autonomy, doing no harm as a researcher, and making the selection process equitable (Taylor, 2013; Seidman, 2006). The benefits for the participants outweigh the minimal risk in this study, thus establishing leadership characteristics will help in the development and retention of leaders in their organization.
Research Method and Design

This study addressed the problem of development and retention of leaders in PSFs by determining desirable leadership characteristics. The study considered a business problem with human and social implications for PSFs organizations and used the qualitative research method with a case study design. Creswell (2013) stated that qualitative research:

Begins with assumptions and the use of interpretative frameworks that inform the study of research problems, addressing the meaning of individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems. To study this problem, qualitative researchers used an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis, that was both inductive and deductive, to establish patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation of the study findings included the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change. (p. 44)

Method

This study used a qualitative research method in lieu of a quantitative or mixed methods based on the methodological differences between them. Stake (2010) described how qualitative methods are aiming for an explanation, a personal role by the researcher and generate descriptions and situational interpretation of the phenomena under study. Furthermore, qualitative research methods included the researcher to be an instrument that plays a subjective role in this study by using personal experience and making interpretations, used interviews and were built around experiential understanding. The use of the qualitative research was about the
way things happen or are working, which required the researcher to probe assertions until the experience is credible (Stake, 2010).

Stake (2010) explained that quantitative methods are aiming for understanding, the researcher has an impersonal role, improve the critical interpretation and provide practical applications to the diverse audience of the research. They establish generalization and pervasive explanatory relationships, with relevance to other cases, over their diverse situations. The quantitative researchers use inferential statistics as an asset for significance and level of confidence in their findings (Stake, 1995). In addition, mixed methods were challenging for this study due to the different technical, rhetorical, and aesthetic criteria between them (Greene, 2007).

Stake (1995) summarized the three differences between qualitative and quantitative methods: (a) explanation and understanding as the purpose of inquiry, (b) personal and impersonal role of the researcher, and (c) knowledge discovered and constructed. The research to understanding desirable leadership characteristics in a PSFs followed the qualitative study characteristics intent since the study requires to be: (a) interpretative, (b) experiential, (c) situational, (d) personalistic, (e) well triangulated, and (f) with strategic choices towards particularization and some generalization (Stake, 2010).

**Research Design**

The focus of the study was to analyze perceptions among leaders at various levels in a PSF with operations at different metropolises in North America, to determine desirable leadership characteristics needed to develop sufficient leader base for the organization sustainability in succession planning for decades to come. It addressed the question “which are the desirable leadership characteristics needed to retain and develop leaders in the organization?”
The design method used in this qualitative research study was the case study, since the research question posed focus on a contemporary event affecting the leadership in PSFs. The researcher did not have control over it, thus the researcher’ interpretations are more emphasized than the interpretations of the people in the study. This is to preserve the multiple realities and different views of what is happening (Stake, 1995). Yin (2009) defined a case study as “an empirical event that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are clearly evident” (p. 18).

**Population and Sampling**

The selected firm consists of over 400 employees, with +/- 15% of them in the role of leaders or emerging leaders, and business operations and offices at several metropolises in North America. This research population consisted of leaders and emerging leaders from a PSF in North America. The leaders are in senior positions of top management, such as chief officers, department heads, and senior positions, who are also owners or shareholders in the organization. The emerging leaders are individuals who attended the 2016-2017 emerging leaders training in the organization, some are owners or shareholders, and some are in the path to shortly become part of ownership in the near future. In addition, they demonstrated a commitment to the organization along with a high level of knowledge in their field of professional expertise. The researcher identified leaders as L1, L2, L3, L4, L5, L6, L7, L8, L9, L10, and L11 and emerging leaders as EL1, EL2, EL3, EL4, EL5, EL6, EL7, EL8, EL9, EL10, and EL11 when providing references about the information they shared.

There are different sampling methods used in selecting participants for research, including purposive, convenience, and random or stratified sample. This study required the
participants to be experienced leaders or emerging leaders in the organization to provide the best data per the problem statement and research question (Saldana, 2011). The purposive sampling technique was used to obtain the particular participants, reflecting the composition of the leaders and emerging leaders for this research in the PSF. Patton (2002) stated that purposive sampling is for “information rich cases from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term yields insight and in depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations” (p. 270).

The total number of leaders and emerging leaders’ interviews were between 15 and 24 per similar research that established this number of participants is sufficient to the desired level of data needed for the analysis (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). This was based on the saturation point of the data collected in which no new relevant information can be generated with additional interviews regarding the study’s subject (Francis et al., 2010). The population of the leaders and emerging leaders in this PSF provided insight, based on their professional and leadership experience, about desirable leadership characteristics to address the problem associated with leaders’ development and retention in the organization, thus helping to maintain the firms’ sustainability.

**Data Collection**

**Instruments**

Qualitative studies require the researcher to do many things, including planning the study, arranging for situations to be observed, interviewing people, examining the records, putting ideas together, and writing reports, thus becoming the main instrument in the research (Stake, 2010). In this study, the researcher used the interview as the instrument to obtain the descriptions and interpretations of the participants in the case study design for this qualitative method research.
The overall purpose of the interview was two-fold: (a) obtaining information or interpretation held by the leaders and emerging leaders interviewed from the selected PSF and (b) finding information that the researcher was not able to observe in the organization (Stake, 1995). The information collected was based on the leaders and emerging leaders understanding of the desirable characteristics that make a good leader, authentic, servant, transformational, and fostering a culture that develops and retains leaders and emerging leaders.

The interviews to each of the individuals who participated from each of the groups, leaders and emerging leaders were focused, since each person was interviewed for 50 minutes and the interview process was guided by following a set of questions. The interview questions, which are in Appendix A and B, were derived from the case study protocol in an open ended format and are asked in a conversational manner. The researcher followed the line of inquiry to establish the participant understanding of desirable leadership characteristics in the organization by asking the questions in an unbiased manner to serve the established line of inquiry (Yin, 2009).

The researcher also followed a process to maintain the instrument’s reliability and validity which consisted of developing the interview questions, based on the information from the literature review, in advance of the data collection process. In addition, the standardized questions were submitted to the leaders and emerging leaders for approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) from Liberty University. Upon the IRB approval these responses to the questions from each participant interview were transcribed to assist in their review and validity before they were interpreted and tabulated.
Data Collection Technique

The participants in the selected PSF were contacted via a phone call to request their consideration to participate in the research. Upon each participant acceptance, a follow up email was sent with the consent document for signature to be sent back to the researcher, before scheduling the interview. The interview was conducted using a recorded go to meeting between the researcher and each participant from a private location for each with no other person(s) allowed to participate or be present during the interview.

The interview questions, which are in Appendix A for Leaders and Appendix B for Emerging Leaders, explored the perceptions among leaders and emerging leaders, at various levels of a PSF in North America. The responses provided helped to determine desirable leadership characteristics needed to develop a sufficient leader base for the organization’s sustainability in retention and succession planning in decades to come.

The data gathered from the interviews with the leaders and emerging leaders at various levels of the organization, helped to determine desirable leadership characteristics for good leaders who are authentic, servant, transformational, and foster a culture to retain and develop leaders and emerging leaders in the PSF. The researcher transcribed and triangulated the interviews with the participants and used his field notes to compare, tabulate, and interpret the information by different leadership theories, to provide conclusions and practical implications in accordance with the research question and purpose of the study.

Data Organization Techniques

The data collected from each participant of the interview responses and the associated field notes by the researcher were stored electronically and formatted to allow for room notation in the margins. In addition, each participant’s interview document was logged in the respective
group, leaders and emerging leaders, by the researcher using a reflective journal to record the research process and the interviews’ field notes.

**Data Analysis Technique**

The analysis of the data required an inductive strategy to review and find its patterns in response to the questions by the participants in the study, which are concurrent with the collection process. The format of the interview for each group, leaders, and emerging leaders, allowed for an open-descriptive coding approach consisting of making notations with descriptive codes that are interesting, potentially relevant, or important to the study (Merriam, 2009). Upon the completion of the descriptive codes, patterned codes were utilized to summarize the categories or themes with good leaders or emerging leaders who are authentic, servant, transformational, and foster a culture to retain and develop them (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

The responses given by the participants in each of the interviews were transcribed to a word document and sent back for the review and proof by each participant to establish reliability and validity to the collected data. This process is called triangulation or the effort to ensure that the information in the transcribed interview is as provided by the participant (Stake, 1995). Each participant reviewed his or her interview responses for accuracy and revised the documents accordingly. Upon the completion of the document review by each participant, the revised document was sent back to the researcher for the interpretation and tabulation of the data.

**Reliability and Validity**

Qualitative studies are perceived not to be able to generalize their findings but have proven to be effective to evaluate experiences in their context, thus the importance to establish the reliability and validity in this study (Stake, 2010).
Reliability

Reliability in the study addressed the quality and overall trustworthiness of the study and the ability to replicate its results with the same methods and participants by another researcher (Yin, 2009), thus its focus was in the actual information used for the analysis and results presented in the study (Golafshani, 2003). This study reliability was based on the established protocol that guided the researcher in carrying out the data collection, triangulation and the creation of a case study data base that preserved the collected data in a reliable form (Yin, 2009).

This researcher followed a process, to document properly all data associated collection, organization and interpretation. It consisted in inviting the participants to the study, sending and receiving the consent from the participants, retaining all email with the participants to keep proper documentation of the data collection process, and their questions. In addition, the researcher kept field notes prior, during, and after the interview with each participant to record information that is outside of the structured questions from the interview and reviewed the interview transcripts to verify its content and made the necessary editing by the participants.

Validity

The validity of qualitative studies is connected to the rigor and quality of the study conducted by preventing researcher bias. This requires the researcher to evaluate his own beliefs about the study’s subject before the interviews take place as well as precautions to suspend judgment during the data collection and analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). In addition, this study researcher used bracketing or the process to bracket and document his experiences and the understandings of desirable leadership characteristics to guard against the issues of bias, misdirected judgment and leading in the interview process (Bednall, 2006).
Yin (2009) described validity regarding terms of internal or external. The internal validity seeks to establish a causal relationship in which certain conditions are believed to lead to other conditions, thus it is only appropriate for casual studies and not descriptive or exploratory studies. The external validity defines the domain to which study’s findings are generalized, which in case studies, requires the use of analytical generalization by the researcher in the set of results to a broader extent, but limited based on the scope of the study (Yin, 2009).

This study provides the readers with an understanding of desirable leadership characteristics. It is based on authentic, servant, and transformational leadership theories and their effect in the retention and development of their present and future leadership in a PSF with operations in several metropolises in North America, thus a comprehensive description, analysis and broader conclusions are applicable to organizations that are similar to the PSF in which the case study research took place.

**Transition and Summary**

This section provided the project search methods and design for this case study exploring the leadership characteristics, based on leadership, organizational and implementing organizational change theories, needed in a professional services firm (PSF) with operations in several metropolises in North America. The research method and design was described with the collection, analysis, reliability, and validity of the data.

The context of this study and the interview instruments with pertinent questions to the research were used in an environment of confidentiality for the participants’ protection. The next section presents the study’s findings and practical implications for professional practice, action, and further study along with reflection and conclusions.
Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

This section describes the study application to professional practice and practical implementations for change in PSFs with operations in North American metropolises, to determine desirable leadership characteristics that help in the development and retention of leaders, thus affecting these organizations sustainability and legacy. The section includes the overview of the study, presentation of the findings, application to professional practice, recommendations for action, recommendations for further study, reflections, and summary and study conclusions.

The study relied on a qualitative research method, which drew from the researcher and participants’ personal experience, social sciences, and professional view thoughts and ethics, with meaningful information that is expected to be assimilated by the prospective readers’ existing knowledge (Stake, 1995). In addition, the study professional view confirmed its dependency on the experience within an organizational setting of the researcher and those who participated, thus it expects to do the same with those to whom the information will be conveyed (Stake, 2010).

Overview of the Study

The study addressed the problem of developing and retaining leaders in PSFs with characteristics similar to the organization from which the participants are part of its leadership, to determine the desirable leadership characteristics based on the authentic, servant, and transformational leadership theories. The qualitative research method used a case study with interview instruments to obtain the data from the selected sample of the population of leaders and emerging leaders in the PSF.
The study findings showed its significance, evidence and completeness, considering leader and emerging leaders’ perspectives, by providing useful information that can be used for knowledge based PSFs in the selection of individuals that should be in positions of leadership. It helps readers’ existing knowledge of the subject to construct the meanings of the case, so naturalistic generalization is facilitated (Stake, 1995). The researcher followed a comprehensive qualitative study which consisted in the analysis of the problem by understanding its background and establishing the associated problem and purpose statements. This was followed by the description of the nature and significance of the study, formulation of the research question, the conceptual framework, definition of terms, and the review of the professional and academic literature.

Once the foundation of the study was established, the researcher prepared the research instruments, consisting of leaders and emerging leaders’ interviews, and secured the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before engaging the participants in the research. Upon receiving the approval, the researcher worked with the PSF corporate support group to select the leaders and emerging leaders to participate in the study. The participants were chosen from the group leaders in the organization who are shareholders and principals with senior to corporate leadership positions. In addition, leaders and future leaders were chosen from those who attended the 2016-2017 emerging leaders program sponsored by the organization. The selection process took place receiving the advice from the organization human resources leadership to select a representative sample of the leaders and emerging leaders among all operations in the PSF. Each of the selected participants were reached via a phone call that followed up with an email containing the consent form per the documents are shown in Appendix B, C, and D.
The researcher proceeded to conduct each participant interview via go to meeting at a scheduled day and time convenient for each participant. Each interview did not last more than 50 minutes and started with an opening statement by the researcher to thank the participant and go over the interview intent. This was followed by the response and feedback from the participant for each question while the researcher took notes and the interview was recorded.

Upon the completion of all the interviews, the researcher collected and organized all written notes from the transcribed and member checked interviews, recordings and the written notes offered by some participants to create the desirable leadership characteristics’ lists from each of the seven areas addressed in the interview questions by each leader, emerging leader, and both leaders and emerging leaders. The researcher was able to put together a list of 20 characteristics of a good leader as identified by all participants in the study. In addition a summary of comments were compiled, from the participants for leadership behaviors and initiatives in the organization, and their own examples for each of the areas from the questions in the interviews. Lastly, the participants gave comments about their perceptions of behaviors’ examples in the organization that they did not believe correspond to good leadership characteristics.

**Presentation of the Findings**

The research question in this study addressed the perceptions of desirable leadership characteristics to retain and develop present and future leaders in a PSF. The study utilized interviews with questions for the leaders and emerging leaders in the organization to provide their understanding about these characteristics for a leader who is: (a) good, (b) develops future generation of leaders, (c) retains future generation of leaders, (d) fosters a culture with legacy for
organization sustainability beyond him or herself, (e) trustworthy and believable, (f) helps others with honesty and treats them fairly, and (g) empowers followers and nurtures them.

The leaders and emerging leaders who participated in this study identified twenty desirable leadership characteristics they believed are required for the leaders and emerging leaders in the organization in the following order of importance: (a) cares for others by giving personal attention and going out of the way, being compassionate, taking the time to listen, challenging employees when stretching their boundaries with proper support, being open to share knowledge, becoming a good Samaritan and making sacrifices; (b) visionary by planning ahead, getting people to do their best, understanding of employee talent and letting go the untalented, and understanding generational issues; (c) motivator by challenging and giving responsibilities to the employees so they can grow; (d) good communicator by being open and having verbal and written communication skills; (e) integrity by being someone who follows thru with what they say, is sincere and genuine, and gives opinions that are consistent with the message; (f) transparent; (g) respectful by being a good listener, appreciating others and recognizing the employees and their abilities; and (h) honest by speaking the truth. The other desirable characteristics mentioned were (i) knowledgeable, (j) leads by example, (k) unselfish, (l) coach/mentor/teacher, (m) passionate, (n) charismatic, (o) humble, (p) self-confident, (q) committed, (r) prudent, (s) kind, and (t) high ethics and values.

The list of characteristics, based on the findings of the research from the participants in the study, have similarities with those found in the literature review. The participants in the study are all engineers in the organization, with the exception of one of them who is a corporate officer with only administrative duties in the organization, did express to be sensitive to how leadership behaviors, practices, and culture are fostered in the organization’s population
performing intellectual intensive work. They indicated the importance of the leadership in the organization to display behaviors with good leadership characteristics to promote a positive job satisfaction experience needed for employees’ development and retention (Laglera et al., 2013).

The findings also had similarities to the scholarly sources explaining how the work environments in the 21st century require leaders in the organizations who: (a) are visionary with integrity; (b) are sensible to the needs of stakeholders or caring for others with integrity and honesty; (c) work with their followers or lead them by example; (d) empower employees or motivate them; (e) use strategists that foster cooperation with good communication; (f) are educated or knowledgeable; and (g) are independent or self-confident (Marques, 2015).

The characteristics from the data in each of the questions are presented in tables, with some of the statements made by the leaders and emerging leaders, along with references from the literature review and conceptual framework found in Section 1. Furthermore, a complete list of all characteristics, for answers to all seven questions by the leaders, emerging leaders and combination of both, along with some definitions of good leaders by the participants had been given. They all concurred about the importance of the individuals who are leaders in the PSF to properly influence all employees in the individual operations and the whole organization to achieve the strategic goals with efficiency and efficacy by being good leaders per the definition of this study (Northouse, 2016).

**Characteristics of a Good Leader**

Organizations need good leaders per the definition given in this study to help in energizing and motivating employees to achieve aligned actions and strategic priorities for the organization (Daft, 2013). Table 5 provides a list of desirable characteristics for a good leader in
accordance with the times they were mentioned the most by the leaders and emerging leaders who participated in the interviews.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of a Good Leader</th>
<th>Leaders (L)</th>
<th>Emerging Leaders (EL)</th>
<th>Both (L and/or EL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1) visionary, (2) honest, (3) good communicator, (4) integrity, (5) cares for others, (6) charismatic, (7) leads by example, (8) motivator, (9) respectful, (10) passionate, (11) transparent, and (12) self-confident</td>
<td>(1) integrity, (2) cares for others, (3) good communicator, (4) leads by example, (5) visionary, (6) honest, (7) respectful, (8) motivator and (9) passionate</td>
<td>(1) integrity, (2) honest, (3) cares for others, (4) good communicator, (5) visionary, (6) leads by example, (7) respectful, (8) motivator, (9) passionate, (10) charismatic, (11) transparent and (12) self-confident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above findings indicated that the most mentioned characteristics by the group of leaders for a good leader are: (a) visionary, (b) honest, (c) good communicator, and (d) integrity. On the other hand, emerging leaders indicated the same type of characteristics are: (a) integrity, (b) cares for others, (c) good communicator, and (d) visionary. Both of the groups concurred in all characteristics but one, cares for others, which is still identified as number five in the leaders list. The results showed a close and common understanding between the leaders and emerging leaders of what good leader desirable characteristics should be.

The leaders and emerging leaders shared their thoughts about good leadership behavior or the promotion and support of initiatives that foster good leadership in the organization, thus some of these are described in Table 6. Based on the most mentioned characteristics by the leaders and emerging leaders shown in Table 5, the following behaviors are found to support these characteristics: (a) integrity was shown by leaders in the organization who are transparent with their strengths and weaknesses (L10), (b) honesty was shown by a leader who treats every person in the organization with no favoritism and with the same high value (L6), (c) caring for others was shown by leaders who create a positive work environment in the organization (EL7),
and (d) good communicator and visionary were shown by a corporate leader who is open to share the vision of the organization (L3). This information shows the efforts, as indicated by the participants’ comments in Table 6, to apply good leadership behavior by this organization’s leadership.

Table 6

**Good Leadership Examples**

| Leaders (L) | L1 shared how the director in the operations approaches the decision making processes with openness, regardless of agreeing or disagreeing with the viewpoint of others  
|             | L3 appreciated one of the corporate officer who is open to share the vision for the organization  
|             | L5 appreciated the organization support provided to the employees for advancement in their professional careers  
|             | L6 acknowledges a leader in the organization who treats every person in the organization with no favoritism and with the same high value  
|             | L10 appreciated leaders in the organization who are transparent with their strengths and weaknesses  
| Emerging Leaders (EL) | EL3 appreciated leaders who support company initiatives beyond their direct responsibilities  
|                     | EL4 appreciated leaders who work shoulder to shoulder with the employees in the organization  
|                     | EL5 appreciated the example of a leader in the operation who has a track record of client commitment for several decades  
|                     | EL7 was grateful for several leaders who create positive work environments in the organization  
|                     | EL11 appreciated an individual in the operation who reacts adequately to challenges when these had been presented to this leader  

Leaders and emerging leaders provided examples of behaviors that need change, to foster good leadership in the organization, as described in Table 7. The beliefs there are a lot of managers and not enough leaders (L9) and not all operations have good leaders (EL9), exists.

Table 7

**Non Good Leadership Examples**

| Leaders (L) and Emerging Leaders (EL) | L9 shared the belief that there are many managers in the organizations and not enough leaders  
| and | EL9 shared the belief that the organization has good leaders but not in all the operations  

The leaders and emerging leaders shared their thoughts about their own leadership behavior that fostered good leadership in the organization, thus some of these are described in Table 8. Based on three most mentioned characteristics by the leaders and emerging leaders shown in Table 5 the following behaviors are found to support these characteristics: (a) integrity was shown by helping people to analyze and understand their weaknesses (L9), (b) honesty was shown by sharing with others feelings and thoughts (L3), (c) caring for others was shown by helping the staff with commitment and dedication to complete projects successfully (EL3), and (d) good communication was shown by listening and understanding to others where they are, and allowing them to ask questions without getting irritated (L8). This information shows the efforts, as indicated by the participants’ comments in Table 8, to apply their own good leadership behaviors.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good Leadership Behaviors Fostered in the PSF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaders (L)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 indicated being honest by sharing with others feelings and thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3 indicated to avoid making an example of individuals who make mistakes in front of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L5 shared listening to others in the organization to understand where they are, thus allowing people to ask questions without getting irritated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L6 explained helping the people to be objective, impartial, innovative and creative by fostering proper initiatives in the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L8 indicated showing the employees in the operation that no task is above any leader, thus assisting them in any way to make sure they are successful in their work assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L9 indicated to help people in the operation by analyzing and understanding their strengths and weaknesses to properly distribute work assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Leaders (EL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL1 indicated being there for the employees with an attitude of thinking about their professional and personal needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2 indicated being organized in his projects and works shoulder to shoulder with the project teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL3 shared helping the staff with commitment and dedication to complete projects successfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL5 explained being perseverant with the ability to follow thru with commitments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EL7 indicated caring about the staff in the organization, thus empowers them be the best in what they do
EL11 indicated helping to keep the project team organized for the things they need to get done

These findings are in accordance with the literature review intent that indicated how a PSF like the one in this study benefited when there are good leaders with vision and integrity, who empower employees using good communication with trust and authority in a collaborative environment, in the organization that shares responsibilities and power among all stakeholders (Merat & Bo, 2012) as L3 stated “I appreciate a senior executive leader approach to share his vision for the organization.” This approach is fostered when leadership that cares for others in the organization, is open and reaches out to the employees, by considering the ideas given by all of them with honesty, cooperation, compassion and emotional stability (Conlin, 2016) as EL4 stated “I am encouraged by several leaders who work shoulder to shoulder with all members of the organization.”

There were two participants, L10 and EL3, who offered definitions of a good leader which do embrace the intent of some of the concepts associated with the desirable good leadership characteristics. L10 stated that “a good leader is an individual that you will follow to a place you do not want to go alone” and EL3 stated that “a good leader supports the team and takes the proper approach with initiatives to address everything related to the success of the team whether positive (recognition) or negative (discipline).”

**Characteristics of a Leader Who Develops Future Generations of Leaders**

Organizations need leaders who develop future generations of leaders by fostering activities for employee development that prompt and mobilize the correct leadership behavior in their members (Spector, 2013). Table 9 provides a list of desirable characteristics for a leader
who develops future generations of leaders in accordance with the times they were mentioned the most by the leaders and emerging leaders who participated in the interviews.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Leaders Developing Future Generations of Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaders (L)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Leaders (EL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both (L and/or EL)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above findings indicate that the most mentioned characteristics by the group of leaders for a leader who develops future generations of leaders are: (a) cares for others and (b) good communicator, (c) motivator, and (d) knowledgeable. On the other hand, emerging leaders indicated the same type of characteristics are: (a) cares for other, (b) good communicator, (c) visionary, and (d) leads by example. These two groups concurred in the characteristics of caring for others and good communicator and differ in the other two since leaders indicate motivator and knowledgeable and emerging leaders visionary and lead by example. These characteristics are included in both, leaders and emerging leaders lists, but not at the top two as shown in Table 9. The results show a close and common understanding between the leaders and emerging leaders of what a leader who develops future generations of leaders’ characteristics should be.

The leaders and emerging leaders shared their thoughts about leadership who develops future generations of leaders as showed by their own behaviors, or the promotion and support of initiatives that foster leadership who develop future generation of leaders in the organization, as described in Table 10. Based on the most mentioned characteristics by the leaders and emerging leaders who participated in the interviews as shown in Table 9, the following behaviors are found
to support these characteristics: (a) caring for others was shown by leaders who take the time to
listen and help (EL2), (b) good communicator was shown by leaders who promote training and
acquiring knowledge to improve as an individual and professional (L1), and (c) visionary was
shown by the organization leadership and mentoring programs (EL10). This information shows
the efforts, as indicated by the participants in Table 10, to apply leadership practices and
behavior that develop future generation of leaders in the organization by this organization’s
leadership.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developing Future Generation of Leaders Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaders (L)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 shared how the organization promotes training and acquiring knowledge to improve as an individual and professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L4 appreciated the mentorship program and principal performance criteria initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L5 appreciated the organization emerging leader program for potential associates and shareholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L6 acknowledged the programs in the organization that mentor young people and help the project managers to improve their technical and management skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L8 appreciated leaders in the organization who implement strategic plans and promote continuing education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Leaders (EL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2 appreciated the leaders who take the time to listen and help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL3 appreciated leaders who foster organizational goals, and employees continuing education and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL4 appreciated the organization fostering employees growth professionally and thinking out of the box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL6 shared about a former leader in the organization value who still helps in developing long term relationships with existing clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL7 appreciated the organization emerging leaders’ program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL10 appreciated the organization mentoring programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

L4 provided an example of behaviors that need change, to foster leadership who develops
a future generation of leaders in the organization, as described in Table 11. The belief that the
organization needs to improve the hiring process, to get the right people with all around
leadership characteristics that need to be developed for a long term career in the organization.
Table 11

*Non Developing Future Generation of Leaders Examples*

| Leaders (L) and Emerging Leaders (EL) | L4 expressed a belief that the organization needs to improve the hiring process to get the right all around people |

The leaders and emerging leaders shared their thoughts about their own leadership behaviors in relation to developing future generations of leaders, thus some of these are described in Table 12. Based on the most mentioned characteristics by the leaders and emerging leaders shown in Table 9, the following behaviors are found to support some of the leadership characteristics: (a) cares for others was shown by helping others in planning their career path (L8), (b) good communicator was shown by helping the staff in getting better at their work by sharing the lessons learned in project (EL5), and (c) motivator was shown by fostering a culture for new and existing leaders. This information shows the efforts, as indicated by the participants’ comments in Table 12, to apply their own leadership behaviors to develop future generations of leaders.

Table 12

*Developing Future Generations Behaviors Fostered in the PSF*

| Leaders (L) | L1 indicated to help employees with a humble attitude and providing valuable information for their professional success  
L2 shared an approach in being a support to others by listening and contemplating alternatives when challenges arise  
L6 indicated to invest time in mentoring young leaders in the organization  
L8 shared how to help others in planning their career path  
L9 indicated to foster a culture for new and existing leaders |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Emerging Leaders (EL) | EL3 shared commitment to give time to his staff to help them in being successful in the organization  
EL4 indicated willingness to help others improve their knowledge for better work performance  
EL5 shared to foster homeroom meetings to help staff in getting better at their work by sharing lessons learned in projects |
EL6 shared to stand beside the design team to assist them with guidelines and quality control
EL7 shared taking the time to help others to become leaders
EL11 described getting involved in mentoring programs and initiatives for the organization

These findings describe the efforts in the participants’ PSF to inspire and develop learning by fostering leadership programs and initiatives such as emerging leaders and mentoring programs and women’s initiatives among others, to help leaders accessing and deploying their leadership qualities in reaching meaningful goals, thus providing them with the assistance on specific goals or personal transformation, directive or non-directive professional advice for therapeutic purposes or improve on performance (Bond & Seneque, 2013) as L1 stated “I appreciate the organization promoting training initiatives to acquire knowledge to help individuals in their professional and personal lives.” These leadership programs also include the organization motivating leaders and emerging leaders to achieve post baccalaureate degrees, in addition to other professional development or training programs tailored to the specific needs of the individuals in the organizations.

Leaders and emerging leaders can benefit from these programs that foster organization culture, intelligent teams, intentional and empathy training, and development and emotional intelligence (Boyatzis et al., 2013) as EL3 stated “I appreciate the leadership efforts in promoting organizational goals for continuing education and development.” This is in accordance with the findings in the literature review about the importance of leadership in PSFs to foster developing leaders and emerging leaders for sustainable competitive advantage in the organization (Yulk, 2010) by motivating and encouraging learning and providing the tools and opportunities to be goal setters and visionaries. This indicates how a PSF, like the one in this study, benefits when there are leaders who develop future generations by shifting power relationship using good communication, understanding all the leadership groups’ synergies by caring for others with
vision and respect, exercise capacity to changing by leading by example, and adapt to address the needs for innovation and sustainability (Taylor, 2013; Blakeley & Higgs, 2014).

**Characteristics of a Leader Who Retains Future Generations of Leaders**

Organizations need leaders who retain future generations of leaders to provide conditions that foster goals’ clarity when adopting managing practices in organizations (Waldman, 2011). Table 13 provides a list of desirable characteristics for a leader who retains future generations of leaders in accordance by the times they were mentioned the most by the leaders and emerging leaders.

**Table 13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Leaders Retaining Future Generations of Leaders</th>
<th>Leaders (L)</th>
<th>Emerging Leaders (EL)</th>
<th>Both (L and/or EL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) cares for others, (2) motivator, (3) visionary, (4) charismatic, (5) coach/mentor/teacher, (6) honest, (7) humble, (8) prudent, (9) respectful, (10) unselfish and (11) transparent</td>
<td>(1) cares for others, (2) motivator, (3) visionary, (4) charismatic, (5) coach/mentor/teacher, (6) honest, (7) humble, (8) prudent, (9) respectful, (10) unselfish and (11) transparent</td>
<td>(1) cares for others, (2) visionary, (3) good communicator, (4) motivator, (5) charismatic, (6) coach/mentor/teacher, (7) honest, (8) humble, (9) committed, (10) honest, (11) integrity, (12) kind, (13) knowledgeable, (14) passionate and (15) unselfish</td>
<td>(1) cares for others, (2) motivator, (3) visionary, (4) good communicator, (5) charismatic, (6) humble, (7) unselfish, (8) coach/mentor/teacher, (9) honest, (10) committed, (11) integrity, (12) kind, (13) knowledgeable, (14) leads by example, (15) respectful and (16) transparent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above findings indicate that the most mentioned characteristics by the group of leaders for a servant leader were: (a) cares for others, (b) motivator, (c) visionary, and (d) charismatic. On the other hand, emerging leaders indicated the same type of characteristics are: (a) cares for others, (b) motivator, and (c) visionary for the top three. These two groups concurred in characteristics such as cares for others, motivator and visionary. The leaders did not include several characteristics identified by the emerging leaders such as being committed, honest, kind, knowledge, passionate, unselfish, and having integrity. The emerging leaders,
Unlike the leaders, did not include characteristics such as prudent, respectful, and transparent. The results showed some common understanding and also differences between the leaders and emerging leaders of what a leader who retains future generation of leaders desirable characteristics should be.

The leaders and emerging leaders shared their thoughts about leadership who retains future generations of leaders or the promotion and support of initiatives that support good leadership in the organization, thus some of these are described in Table 14. Based on the three most mentioned characteristics by the leaders and emerging leaders shown in Table 13, the following behaviors are found to support these characteristics: (a) cares for others was shown by understanding the importance of work balance and providing work the needed resources to support employees (L8), (b) motivator was shown creating positive work environments in the organization (EL10), and (c) visionary shown by the organization mentoring programs and new business frontiers’ initiatives (L2). This information shows the efforts, as indicated by the participants in Table 14, to apply leadership who retain future generation of leaders’ behaviors by this organization’s leadership.
Table 14

*Retaining Future Generation of Leaders Examples*

| Leaders (L) | L1 indicated the organization sharing with employees the possibilities to grow in the firm  
|            | L2 appreciated the organization mentoring program and the new business frontiers’ initiatives  
|            | L3 appreciated the women’s initiatives by the organization  
|            | L4 appreciated leaders who promote a great place to work by showing and gaining respect  
|            | L7 shared about the leadership in the operation creating an environment of continuous improvement to motivate employees to stay in the company  
|            | L8 appreciated the leaders in the organization who understand the importance of work balance and provide needed resources to support the employees  
|            | L9 shared how a corporate officer has given opportunities to be empowered and make important decisions for the organization  
|            | L11 appreciated the open book policy in the company  
| Emerging Leaders (EL) | EL1 appreciated the organization investing in employees’ education initiatives  
|            | EL2 appreciated the leaders in the organization who follow thru with his commitments  
|            | EL5 appreciated the leaders in the organization who have the vision to start new operations in other metropolises in North America  
|            | EL7 appreciated the mentoring and teaching programs by the organization  
|            | EL9 appreciated the organization fostering project delivery partnership with people of different operations  
|            | EL10 appreciated several leaders who create positive work environments in the organization  
|            | EL11 appreciated leaders in the organization who are passionate about what they do |

The leaders and emerging leaders shared their thoughts about their own leadership behavior or the promotion and support of initiatives that support good leadership in the organization, thus some of these are described in Table 15. Based on the three most mentioned characteristics by the leaders and emerging leaders shown in Table 13 the following behaviors are found to support these characteristics: (a) cares for others was shown by helping staff to find opportunities for growth as future leaders by creating a sense of belonging (L6), (b) motivator
was shown by following up on commitments and showing good behavior to foster positive work environment in the organization (EL2), and (c) visionary was shown by fostering legacy initiatives to assist future generations of leaders in the organization (L10). This information shows the efforts, as indicated by the participants in Table 15, to apply their own leadership behavior to retain future generations of leaders.

Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retaining Future Generations Behaviors Fostered in the PSF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaders (L)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 indicated being open and giving honest feedback to future associates and shareholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 indicated fostering collaboration visits to assist project managers in their projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3 indicated to help young staff to find opportunities for growth as future leaders by creating a sense of belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L6 indicated commitment to work in promoting innovation and creativity by fostering and leading associated initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L8 indicated genuine interest in helping the employees in their career development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L10 indicated to foster legacy initiatives to assist future generations of leaders in the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L11 indicated to foster openness among employees in the organization and treating them with respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Leaders (EL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2 indicated to follow on commitments and show good behavior in order to create the right team environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL3 shared about promoting strong technical teams in the organization that build trust and collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL5 indicated helping the organization employees to build their 5 to 10 years career plans during their annual reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL7 indicated to foster employees training based on their professional needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL8 indicated to inspire others to excel in their professional careers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL11 shared the pursuit of teaching and leading by example</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings indicate the importance for this PSF to retain leaders and emerging leaders, for sustainability and competitive advantage (Yulk, 2010), by using interventions and practices that foster constructive attitudes and behaviors to empower employees. The leadership understanding of the employees’ goals to be congruent with those of the organization is
necessary for their commitment and satisfaction (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015; Cho & Park, 2011; Maurer & Lippstreu, 2008) as L7 stated “I appreciate the leaders who help in creating environments of continuous improvement to motivate leaders and emerging leaders to stay in the organization.”

The retention of leadership by this PSF is a top priority, due to the challenges it faces based on the rapid changes of globalization and workforce demographics, to attract, motivate, develop, and retain leaders with the right talent (Bunker et al., 2002; Cappell & Hamon, 2005; Bialek, 2014) as L3 stated “I appreciate the opportunity given by the organization to help young staff in finding opportunities for them to growth in their career.” Thus, leadership worthy of imitation to foster retaining leaders requires coaching/mentoring/teaching and being knowledgeable, boldness to the opposition, and pure motives by caring for others, and influencing without asserting authority by being a motivator and charismatic. In addition, this leadership must contain affectionate and emotional behavior by being kind, respectful, vulnerable, transparent, humble with integrity, authentic, sincere, honest, active and not passive, leading by example, follower centered, not self-centered, unselfish, changing the lives of others, visionary, and committed (Whittington et al., 2005).

Characteristics of a Leader Who Fosters a Culture with Legacy for Organization

Sustainability Beyond Him or Herself

Organizations need leaders who establish a culture for legacy and sustainability beyond themselves in the organization to influence policy implementation and reform with a focus on strategy to inspire employees. These leaders must set a path with goal clarity and the development of a culture with the right organizational conditions and success (Moynihan et al., 2011). Table 16 provides a list of desirable characteristics for a leader who establishes a culture
of legacy for organization sustainability beyond him or herself in accordance by the times they were mentioned the most by the leaders and emerging leaders.

Table 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Leaders Establishing Legacy and Sustainability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaders (L)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) cares for others, (2) respectful, (3) visionary, (4) transparent, (5) good communicator, (6) knowledgeable, (7) unselfish, (8) high ethics and value, (9) humble, (10) integrity, (11) motivator and (12) passionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Leaders (EL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) visionary, (2) cares for others, (3) integrity, (4) knowledgeable, (5) motivator, (6) unselfish, (7) charismatic, (8) good communicator, (9) passionate, (10) respectful, and (11) transparent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both (L and/or EL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) visionary, (2) cares for others, (3) respectful, (4) transparent, (5) knowledgeable, (6) unselfish, (7) integrity, (8) motivator, (9) high ethics and values, (10) passionate, (11) charismatic, (12) humble and (13) leads by example</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above findings indicate the three most mentioned characteristics by the group of leaders for leaders who foster a culture of legacy and sustainability beyond themselves: (a) cares for others, (b) respectful, (c) visionary, and (d) transparent. On the other hand, emerging leaders indicated the same type of characteristics are: (a) visionary, (b) cares for others, (c) integrity, and (d) knowledgeable. These two groups concurred in characteristics such as cares for others and visionary. The results showed some common understanding and also differences between the leaders and emerging leaders of what a leader who fosters a culture of legacy for sustainability beyond him or herself desirable characteristics should be. The leaders listed characteristics such as respectful, transparent and good communicator which were not listed by the emerging leaders and did not list integrity, knowledgeable, motivator, and unselfish which were listed by the emerging leaders.

The leaders and emerging leaders shared their thoughts about leaders who foster culture with legacy for organization sustainability beyond him or herself showed by the leader’s own behavior or the promotion and support of initiatives that support good leadership in the
organization, thus some of these are described in Table 17. Based on the three most mentioned characteristics by the leaders and emerging leaders shown in Table 16, the following behaviors are found to support these characteristics: (a) visionary was shown by the organization transition plan initiatives (EL1), (b) cares for others was shown by teaching and motivating employees in the organization (L1), and (c) respectful was shown by a consistent vision that creates a culture of high trust and values (L3). This information shows the efforts, as indicated by the participants in Table 17, to apply leaders who foster a culture with legacy for organization sustainability beyond him or herself leadership behavior by this organization’s leadership.

Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishing a Culture of Legacy and Sustainability Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leaders (L)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 appreciated leaders who teach and motivate employees in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3 appreciated leaders who have a consistent vision that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creates a culture of high trust and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L4 appreciated the organization mentorship program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L5 appreciated the organization approach to promote talented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employees to positions of responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L8 appreciated the board of directors approach to select</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shareholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L11 appreciated the organization initiatives and approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to leadership’s transition, bylaws structuring and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shareholders’ agreements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Emerging Leaders (EL)**                                   |
| EL1 appreciated the organization leadership transition plan |
| initiative                                                 |
| EL4 appreciated the emerging leader training by the         |
| organization                                               |
| EL5 shared about a leader who transfers a major client to a  |
| younger project manager for client service continuity        |
| EL8 appreciated the mentoring initiatives by the organization|
| EL10 appreciated the leader who promotes legacy in the      |
| organization                                                |

Leaders and emerging leaders provided examples of behaviors that need change, to foster leadership with a culture of legacy for sustainability beyond him or herself in the organization, as described in Table 18. The belief that the organization needs to address leaders, who are not focusing in the legacy aspect of the organization (L11) and who only focus on short term goals without caring for the company beyond him or herself (EL3).
Table 18

*Non Establishing a Culture of Legacy and Sustainability*

| Leaders (L) and Emerging Leaders (EL) | L11 indicated his belief that some people are not focusing in the legacy aspect of the organization | EL3 expressed concern about some leaders who only focus on short term goals for the organization |

The leaders and emerging leaders shared their thoughts about their own fostering a culture with legacy for organization sustainability beyond him or her self-leadership behavior in the organization, thus some of these are described in Table 19. Based on the three most mentioned characteristics by the leaders and emerging leaders shown in Table 8 the following behaviors are found to support these characteristics: (a) visionary was shown by fostering forward vision and scenario planning for the organization (L1), (b) cares for others was shown by creating a culture with client focus, professional behavior and transparency (L6), and (c) respectful was shown by fostering transparency when dealing with employees in communicating goals and expectations (EL3). This information shows the efforts, as indicated by the participants in Table 19, to apply a culture with a legacy for organization sustainability beyond him or herself leadership behaviors for the benefit of the organization.

Table 19

*Legacy and Sustainability Behaviors Fostered in the PSF*

| Leaders (L) | L1 indicated to provide honest feedback by sharing with others feelings and thoughts |
| L2 indicated to foster forward vision and scenario planning for the organization |
| L3 shared to growth the company to be one of the largest in the country |
| L4 shared to promote working together in the organization and make the necessary changes to adapt with the industry and the associated cultural diversity |
| L6 shared to help in creating a culture with client focus, professional behavior and transparency |
| L7 indicated to foster an operation with the correct physical and emotional environment with projects that are unique for the professional and personal growth of the employees |
L8 indicated sharing goals and expectations to the employees with transparency
L10 indicated to contribute in the organization multigenerational initiatives

Emerging Leaders (EL)
EL1 indicated being a good steward in the assigned position and promoting others to become future leaders
EL2 shared helping to lay out the projects’ processes for the team success
EL3 indicated to foster professional transparency when dealing with employees in communicating goals and expectations
EL6 shared to foster a technical sense of community and respect
EL8 indicated to build a team spirit in the organization with people working and staying together
EL9 shared to foster new ideas and pass them along to others
EL10 indicated long term commitment to the organization

These findings concur with this PSF approach to create a culture of high level leadership, by collaborating and engaging team work initiatives without a silo mentality for individual and selfish gain, for the common good in the organization (Costa et al., 2014). This creates a loyalty in organizations that is fundamental to establish a culture for developing and retaining employees (Guillon & Cezanne, 2014). The leadership can affect positively the stakeholders when the culture in the organization considers the employees to be important, encourages diverse perspectives in their approach, builds an open, inclusive and diverse internal culture, fosters strong ties with external stakeholders, and manages cross cultural boundaries (Doh & Quigley, 2014).

The participants understanding of leadership that fosters a culture with a positive approach by the employees with attitudes of collaboration and engaging teams, requires leaders characteristics such as: (a) confidence to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks by leading by example, and being charismatic; (b) make positive attribution about succeeding now and in the future by being a visionary, caring for others, and being a motivator, humble, and respectful (Luthans, 2012) as L5 stated “I appreciate Steven Job’s
example of having a consistent vision of what a company should do for transformation by fostering and creating a culture of trust that believes in good values.” This also requires a behavioral approach by the leaders with (a) perseverance towards goals and being transparent, having ethics and values; (b) when necessary, redirecting paths to goals in order to succeed by being passionate and unselfish; and (c) when beget by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back even beyond to attain success by having knowledge and integrity (Luthans, 2012) as EL 5 stated “I appreciate the leaders that foster transparent and trusted relationships with all among the members in the organization.”

**Characteristics of a Leader Who Fosters Authentic Leadership**

Organizations need authentic leaders who lead with moralistic and honest behavior by promoting an environment of open communication, with all individuals in the organizations, thus giving them a sense of importance, value, trustworthiness and proper citizen behavior (Marques, 2015). Table 20 provides a list of desirable characteristics for an authentic leader in accordance with the times they were mentioned the most by the leaders and emerging leaders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of an Authentic Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leaders (L)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) integrity, (2) transparent, (3) visionary, (4) cares for others, (5) good communicator, (6) knowledgeable, (7) motivator, and (8) humble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emerging Leaders (EL)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) good communicator, (2) integrity, (3) transparent, (4) honest, (5) humble, (6) cares for others, (7) knowledgeable, (8) leads by example, (9) motivator, (10) respectful and (11) visionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Both (L and/or EL)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) integrity, (2) transparent, (3) good communicator, (4) honest, (5) visionary, (6) cares for others, (7) humble, (8) knowledgeable and (9) motivator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above findings indicate the most mentioned characteristics by the group of leaders for leaders who foster a culture of legacy and sustainability beyond themselves: (a) integrity, (c) transparent, and (c) visionary. On the other hand, emerging leaders indicated the same type of
characteristics are: (a) good communicator, (b) integrity, (c) transparent, and (d) honest. These two groups concurred in characteristics such as integrity and transparent. The emerging leaders listed characteristics such as good communicator, honest, and humble which are not listed by the leaders and do not list visionary which is listed by the leaders. The results showed some and common understanding between the leaders and emerging leaders of what an authentic leader characteristics should be. This is indicated in the literature review showing that authentic leaders follow a vision that foster an environment of trust in which the employees are given autonomy to perform their responsibilities, transparency with share communication, knowledge with generation of ideas, and behave with integrity by being positive models to develop a proactive attitude in the employees (Stull & Aram, 2010).

The leaders and emerging leaders shared their thoughts about authentic leadership showed by the leaders’ behavior, and the promotion and support of initiatives that support good leadership, in the organization, thus some of these are described in Table 21. Based on the three most mentioned characteristics by the leaders and emerging leaders shown in Table 20, the following behaviors are found to support these characteristics: (a) integrity was shown by leaders who do things right with honesty and respect (EL5), (b) transparency was shown by the organization open approach to share the state of the organization with employees (L5), and (c) good communicator shown by leaders who create a positive work environment in the organization as shown in the town halls held by the organization to share matters affecting employees (L2). This information shows the efforts, as indicated by the participants in Table 21, to apply authentic leadership behavior by this organization’s leadership.
Table 21

**Authentic Leadership Examples**

| Leaders (L) | L1 shared about a corporate officer who motivates leaders to be open about issues in projects affecting the organization’s welfare  
|             | L2 appreciated the town halls held by the organization to share about matters that affect the employees  
|             | L5 appreciated the open policies to share with the employees the state of the organization  
|             | L7 appreciated the wisdom shared by a corporate officer about being a successful operations director  
|             | L8 appreciated leader who work in building an environment of fair collaboration and trust in the organization  

| Emerging Leaders (EL) | EL4 appreciated leaders who are honest and say what they are thinking  
|                       | EL5 appreciated leaders who do things right with honesty and respect  
|                       | EL8 shared about an operations director who addresses challenges with an open and candid conversation about the situation  
|                       | EL9 appreciated leaders who explain how things had been done in the organization and in the projects’ means and methods  
|                       | EL10 appreciated the sharing knowledge initiatives by the organization  
|                       | EL11 appreciated leaders in the organization who make people appreciated and valuable  

Leaders and emerging leaders provided examples of behaviors that need change, to foster authentic leadership in the organization, as described in Table 22. The belief is the organization needs to address people, trying to move up in the organization without the needed experience, and the need to deal with situations when broken trust has taken place among leaders (L10). In addition, the need to deal with the effect of profitability in the actions and intentions of some leaders (EL4), negative competition among operations and (EL7) and leaders who talk poorly about others (EL10).

Table 22

**Non Authentic Leadership Examples**

| Leaders (L) and Emerging Leaders (EL) | L10 expressed concern about people trying to move up in the organization without the needed experience and situation when broken trust has taken place among leaders  
|                                        | EL4 expressed concern about the effect of profitability in the actions and intentions of some leaders  

EL7 expressed concerned about the negative competition among operations
EL10 expressed concerned about leaders who talk poorly about others

The leaders and emerging leaders shared their thoughts about their own leadership behaviors that support authentic leadership in the organization, thus some of these are described in Table 23. Based on the three most mentioned characteristics by the leaders and emerging leaders shown in Table 20 the following behaviors are found to support these characteristics: (a) integrity was shown by avoiding place others in a weak or vulnerable situation when dealing with difficult circumstances (EL2), (b) transparent was shown by telling the truth about deadlines and mistakes with the employees in the organization (EL7), and (c) good communicator was shown by being open in sharing others the needed information to complete projects successfully (L3). This information shows the efforts, as indicated by the participants in Table 23, to apply authentic leadership behaviors for the benefit of the organization.

Table 23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authentic Leadership Behaviors Fostered in the PSF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaders (L)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 indicated to foster the organization ownership model in the board meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3 shared to be open in sharing with others the needed information to complete projects successfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L4 shared about promoting balance in work load by providing flexibility and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L5 indicated to share with employees the company’s initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L6 indicated to be transparent and have good behavior in the proper professional matter when dealing with circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L8 shared to be supportive and follow thru with commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L9 indicated to foster the start of new offices in states where the company does not have operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Leaders (EL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2 indicated to avoid placing others in a weak or vulnerable situation when dealing with difficult circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL3 indicated to be supportive and follow thru with commitment to the organization’s employees and clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL5 indicated to tell the truth about deadlines and mistakes with the employees in the organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EL7 indicated to be opened about mistakes with the affected stakeholders in projects or others matters in the organization
EL9 indicated to share his knowledge with others in the company
EL10 indicated to take care of problems when arise in a timely matter

The findings concur that the leadership in this PSF fosters a leader-follower’s interactions that are open and transparent in the relationships with all employees that affect commitment and job satisfaction, and increase employees ‘creativity and performance (Semedo et al., 2016).

Thus, many of these leaders build benevolence and integrity with their followers by encouraging totally open communication, engaging to share critical information, and their perceptions and feelings about the people with whom they work (Avolio et al., 2004) as L8 stated “I appreciate leaders who work in building open and trusted relationships throughout the organization.”

The approach to leadership that fosters an authentic leadership behavior requires leaders who have strong values and integrity, lead with purpose, and motivate their employees to provide better customer service. They develop (a) behavioral consistency and integrity with transparency and humbleness, sharing and delegation of control with vision, and good or competent communication and demonstration of concern for others; (b) link people, processes and the environment to improve the role of success with honesty and knowledge; and (c) foster effective communication by leaders to build trusting relationship by caring for others and show support for the employees through encouragement (Wang & Hsieh, 2013) as EL5 stated “I appreciate leaders that do what is right with honesty and respect.”

**Characteristics of a Leader Who Fosters Servant Leadership**

Organizations need servant leaders who are not concerned about their own personal advancement, but foster and pursue the well-being and needs, advancement, and autonomy of others who need guidance. They hold a foundation of mutual caring, trust, and sense of community that enables organizations to properly, effectively, and efficiently build their
organization leadership group (Washington et al., 2014; Peterson et al., 2012). Table 24 provides a list of desirable characteristics for a servant leader in accordance with the times they were mentioned the most by the leaders and emerging leaders.

Table 24  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Servant Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaders (L)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) cares for others, (2) integrity, (3) motivator (4) good communicator, (5) unselfish, (6) visionary and (7) transparent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Leaders (EL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) cares for others, (2) integrity, (3) transparent, (4) motivator, (5) respectful and (6) unselfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both (L and/or EL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) cares for others, (2) integrity, (3) motivator, (4) transparent, (5) unselfish, (6) respectful, (7) coach/mentor/teacher, (8) good communicator, (9) leads by example and (10) visionary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above findings indicate the three most mentioned characteristics by the group of leaders for leaders who foster a culture of legacy and sustainability beyond themselves: (a) cares for others, (b) integrity, and (c) motivator. On the other hand, emerging leaders indicated the same type of characteristics are: (a) cares for others, (b) integrity, and (c) transparent. The leaders listed good communicator and visionary, which were not in the emerging leaders list, and respectful was part of the emerging leaders list and not the leaders list. The results showed some common understanding between the leaders and emerging leaders of what a servant leader characteristics should be.

The leaders and emerging leaders shared their thoughts about servant leadership showed by leaders’ behavior, or the promotion and support of initiatives that support good leadership in the organization, thus some of these are described in Table 25. Based on the three most mentioned characteristics by the leaders and emerging leaders shown in Table 24, the following behaviors are found to support them: (a) cares for others was shown by being direct, fair, honest, respectful to the employees in the organization (EL2), (b) integrity was shown by leaders who understand the big picture for the organization and treat all employees with respect (L5), and (c)
A motivator was shown by helping employees find their place in the organization (EL4). This information shows the efforts, as indicated by the participants in Table 25, to apply servant leadership behavior by this organization’s leadership.

Table 25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Servant Leadership Examples</th>
<th>Leaders (L)</th>
<th>Emerging Leaders (EL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>L1 appreciated leaders not holding to information but sharing with the project’s stakeholders</td>
<td>EL1 appreciated the open and honest conversation fostered by leaders in the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>L2 appreciated the organization approach to bonus distribution with fairness due to the input from the required organization’s stakeholders</td>
<td>EL2 appreciated leaders who are direct, fair, honest and respectful to the employees in the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3</td>
<td>L5 appreciated leaders who understand the big picture for the organization and treat all employees with respect</td>
<td>EL4 appreciated leaders who help employees find their place in the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L4</td>
<td>L6 shared about leaders who foster employee training to perform their work at an above industry standard with efficacy and efficiency</td>
<td>EL6 appreciated the corporate officer who foster organization’s high standards without imposing them to the employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L5</td>
<td>L8 appreciated leaders who are open to listen and keep confidentiality when required</td>
<td>EL8 appreciated leaders who are professional and do not talk poorly about people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L6</td>
<td>EL6 appreciated the organization town hall meetings</td>
<td>EL11 appreciated the organization town hall meetings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Leaders and emerging leaders provided examples of behaviors that need change, to foster servant leadership in the organization, as described in Table 26. The belief that the organization needs to address the situation with some people, who are in the wrong position in leadership (L10) and the perceived lack of trust by some of the leaders in the organization (EL8), exists.

Table 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Servant Leadership Examples</th>
<th>Leaders (L)</th>
<th>Emerging Leaders (EL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L10 expressed concerned about the organization keeping employees in the wrong position</td>
<td>EL8 expressed a perceived lack of trust in some of the leaders in the organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The leaders and emerging leaders shared their thoughts about their own servant leadership behavior, thus some of these are described in Table 27. Based on the three most mentioned characteristics by the leaders and emerging leaders shown in Table 24 the following behaviors are found to support them: (a) cares for others was shown by delegating responsibilities and balancing employees weaknesses and strengths for the proper role in the project or task at hand (L2), (b) integrity was shown by treating others with honesty and respect (L1), and (c) motivator was shown by treating others the same and being there for the employees with an attitude of thinking about their professional and personal needs (EL1) This information shows the efforts, as indicated by the number of the participants to apply servant leadership behaviors for the benefit of the organization.

Table 27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Servant Leadership Examples Fostered in the PSF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaders (L)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 indicated to treat others with honesty and respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 indicated about delegating responsibilities by balancing employees weaknesses and strengths for the proper role in the project or task at hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3 shared to foster a charitable thinking approach by getting involved in community initiatives to help others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L6 indicated to help employees when facing challenges in performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L7 indicated to treat employees fairly even when mistakes are made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L11 shared to help employees performance by using collaboration and accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Leaders (EL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL1 indicated to treat others the same, and being there for the employees, with an attitude of thinking about their professional and personal needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2 indicated to respect the views of others in the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL4 indicated to foster intern and graduate engineers collaboration initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL8 shared to stay working late and side by side with the project team when needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL10 indicated to help others in the organization when they are loaded of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL11 shared to promote mutual trust in the organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The findings indicated this PSF’s interest in leaders who are capable of building long-term relations with followers, and have a caring and nurturing approach to their full potential with high integrity and ethics. Leaders with these characteristics contribute and improve the well-being of followers in a PSF, since they provide the needed values for ethical grounding and leadership framework required to face twenty first century challenge, which affect the current national and international business environments (Daft, 2013) as L1 stated “I appreciate leaders in the organization not holding on to information but sharing it to help others.”

The leaders and emerging leaders indicated characteristics concur with a servant to leader interaction model consisting in applying seven values: (a) be a teacher and being teachable by being a coach/mentor/teacher; (b) creating a place where peace grows within the organization by having integrity, and being a motivator and respectful; (c) demonstrating discipline by being a good communicator; (d) meeting the needs of the followers by caring for others; (e) seeking the greatest good for the organization by being a visionary, transparent, and unselfish; (f) showing concern for others; and (g) showing mercy in actions and beliefs with all people by leading by example (Parris & Peachy, 2012) as EL1 stated “I appreciated leaders that foster open and honest conversations.”

**Characteristics of a Leader Who Fosters Transformational Leadership**

Organizations need transformational leaders who stimulate and inspire followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes and have values and ideals that support the greater good of the organizations and their individuals, rather than their self-agenda and interests, thus becoming models, collaborating, clarifying goals, providing individual support and promoting intellectual innovation (Robbins & Coulter, 2007; Daft, 2013; Marques, 2015). Table 28 provides a list of
desirable characteristics for a transformational leader in accordance with the times they were mentioned the most by the leaders and emerging leaders.

Table 28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Transformational Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaders (L) (1) motivator, (2) visionary, (3) cares for others, (4) passionate, and (5) charismatic, (6) mentor and (7) transparent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Leaders (EL) (1) cares for others, (2) motivator, (3) charismatic, (4) coach/mentor/teacher, (5) honest, (6) integrity, (7) leads by example, (8) respectful and (9) visionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both (L and/or EL) (1) motivator, (2) cares for others, (3) visionary, (4) charismatic, (5) coach/mentor/teacher, (6) passionate, (7) honest, (8) integrity, (9) respectful and (10) transparent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above findings indicate that the most mentioned characteristics by the group of leaders for a transformational leader are: (a) motivator, (b) visionary, and (c) cares for others.

On the other hand, emerging leaders indicated the same type of characteristics are: (a) cares for other, (b) motivator, (c) charismatic, and (d) coach/mentor/teacher. These two groups concurred in all characteristics, thus these results showed a common understanding between the leaders and emerging leaders of what a transformational leader desirable characteristics should be.

The leaders and emerging leaders shared their thoughts about transformational leadership showed by the leaders’ behaviors, or the promotion and support of initiatives that support transformational leadership in the organization, thus some of these are described in Table 29.

Based on the three most mentioned characteristics by the leaders and emerging leaders shown in Table 28, the following behaviors are found to support these characteristics: (a) motivator was shown by appreciating leaders who are open minded to new management approaches and opportunities that foster improvement in the organization in the organization (L3), (b) cares for others was shown by leaders who foster open communication throughout the organization (EL4), and (c) visionary was shown by organization initiatives that foster mentoring, emerging and women programs (EL8 and EL11). This information shows the efforts, as indicated by the
participants in Table 29, to apply transformational leadership practices and behavior by this organization’s leadership.

Table 29

*Transformational Leadership Examples*

| Leaders (L)                  | L1 appreciated leaders who help others with opportunities to step out of their comfort zone  
|                             | L2 appreciated a corporate executive support to make the terms of an important deal for the organization  
|                             | L3 appreciated leaders who are open minded to new management approaches and opportunities that foster improvement in the organization  
|                             | L5 appreciated leaders who respect other leaders and do not second guess them  
|                             | L6 appreciated leaders who foster the quality control process and follow up with feedback to employees in the work they have done  
| Emerging Leaders (EL)           | EL2 shared appreciation for leaders who empower others to pursue new ideas  
|                             | EL4 appreciated leaders who foster open communication throughout the organization  
|                             | EL7 appreciated the organization to foster innovation and creativity initiatives to help employees with advance engineering knowledge  
|                             | EL8 appreciated the organization mentoring and emerging leaders initiatives  
|                             | EL11 appreciated the organization women’s initiative program  

The leaders and emerging leaders shared their thoughts about their own transformational leadership behavior or the promotion and support of initiatives that support transformational leadership in the organization, thus some of these are described in Table 30. Based on the three most mentioned characteristics by the leaders and emerging leaders shown in Table 28 the following behaviors are found to support these characteristics: (a) motivator was shown by empowering employees to follow up in their for feedback, encouragement and successful completion of the work (L6), (b) cares for others was shown by caring about the people in the organizations and their families (L10), and (c) visionary was shown by sharing to facilitate employees in the organization to become successful in their professional careers (L5). This
information shows the efforts, as indicated by the participants in Table 30, to apply transformational leadership behaviors for the benefit of the organization.

Table 30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Transformational Leadership Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leaders (L)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 indicated to help younger staff to reach the next level of promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 shared to challenge employees to be a good listener, fair, honest and firm to get the assignments for the organization done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L5 shared to facilitate employees in the organization to become successful in their professional careers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L6 shared to empower employees by following up with their work for feedback, encouragement and successful completion of their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L7 indicated to tell employees the truth about their aspirations and help them become great at what they do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L10 indicated to care about the people in the organization and their families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emerging Leaders (EL)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL4 indicated to foster open communication with employees in the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL5 shared to believe in the capacity of the employees in the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL6 indicate to avoid overwhelming leaders, thus helping them to perform better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL10 shared to help people to take on new challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL11 indicated to foster a collaborating approach to connect with interns in the organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This PSF pursues to create a dynamic environment to develop an internal business capability for employees reacting positively, due to their job satisfaction, to needed changes affecting efficiency and efficacy (Yang & Islam, 2012). Thus, transformational leaders enhance organizations performance by empowering their people and enabling needed change to increase their self-efficacy and engagement by changing the employees’ personal skills and resources (Tims et al., 2011) as L3 stated “I appreciate leaders that are open to approaches that improve the company.”

There are four characteristic or components of the transformational leadership style that are displayed by leaders: (a) idealized influence or charisma, leading with a clear set of values
and acting as a role model for followers, or providing vision and sense of mission by instilling pride, gain, respect, honesty, and trust; (b) inspirational motivation, leading with optimism for current and future tasks, or communicating high expectations by using important purposes in simple ways by caring for others and being passionate; (c) intellectual stimulation, promoting intelligence, rationality and careful problem solving; and (d) personal and individual attention, giving personal attention, coaching and advising for each employee by being coach/mentor/teacher, honest, and transparent (Warrilow, 2012; Gyensare et al., 2016; Cho & Dansereau, 2010) as L7 stated “I appreciate leaders in the organization who care about people and their families.”

**Summary and Conclusions**

Tables 5, 9, 13, 16, 20, 24, and 28 show lists for the order in which the characteristics were mentioned the most by the participants for each of the areas in the interview questions. The researcher also created Table 31 to show an overall order of characteristics’ priority based on all characteristics indicated by the participants in all areas addressed in the questions of the interview. The participants concluded that good leadership is fostered by a leader who cares for others, is charismatic, is committed, is a coach/mentor/teacher, is a good communicator, has high ethics and values, is honest, is humble, has integrity, is kind, is knowledgeable, leads by example, is a motivator, is passionate, is prudent, is respectful, is transparent, is unselfish, is self-confident, and is a visionary.

The results show the order of priority in the list for each of the groups, leaders, and emerging leaders, is comparable for both as indicated in Table 31. The top five characteristics, caring for others, visionary, motivator, good communicator, and integrity are the same for both but they might not be in the same exact order. Characteristics such as self-confident, prudent,
high ethics and values, committed and kind is the in the same order for both groups’ list and was the least mentioned by the participants.

The interactions between the researcher and the participants demonstrated that leaders and emerging leaders see these characteristics to be important and complementing of each other in the life of a good leader and for the benefit if its organization. The participants expressed in general their expectations that leaders ought to pursue to be wholesome individuals in all areas of their lives, thus, to display genuine behaviors with the characteristics shown in Table 31. Furthermore, they also indicated the leadership journey is one of constant improvement by the leader, and there is a continuous learning and increase wisdom with the pass of time by individuals. The true leaders who have the correct internal and external attitudes, are authentic, servant, and transformational to create a culture with sustainability and legacy that fosters the development and retention of leaders and emerging leaders in PSFs.

Table 31

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Characteristics in a PSF</th>
<th>Leaders</th>
<th>Emerging Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>cares for others</td>
<td>cares for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>visionary</td>
<td>motivator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>motivator</td>
<td>good communicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>good communicator</td>
<td>integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>integrity</td>
<td>visionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>transparent</td>
<td>leads by example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>respectful</td>
<td>respectful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>honest</td>
<td>honest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>knowledgeable</td>
<td>transparent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>leads by example</td>
<td>mentor/teacher/coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>passionate</td>
<td>charismatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>mentor/teacher/coach</td>
<td>humble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>unselfish</td>
<td>knowledgeable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>charismatic</td>
<td>passionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>humble</td>
<td>unselfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>self-confident</td>
<td>self-confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>prudent</td>
<td>prudent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>high ethics/values</td>
<td>high ethics/values</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Applications to Professional Practice

PSFs in metropolises are facing challenges and opportunities that need a leadership retention and development approach in their organizations that address succession to the next level, key transitions, ongoing development, and take care of a potential derailer, thus accelerating their current leaders development and retention risk taking change be sustainable with the needed leadership talent to achieve organizational goals (Underhill, McAnally, & Koriath, 2007).

This requires to foster organizations, with strong cultures that energize and motive their employees, thus unifying their people around share goals and a higher mission by shaping and guiding behaviors in accordance with values such as: (a) the whole is more important than the parts, (b) equality an trust are primary values, and (c) the culture encourages risk taking change and implementation (Daft, 2013). Following are applications to professional practice in the areas of business practice, biblical framework and leadership field of study.

Business Practice

The findings indicated the participants agree about the importance of maintaining a strong culture, with leaders having desirable leadership characteristics that foster relationships with all stakeholders on proper values that are communicated and institutionalized with behaviors that support them. These leaders can encourage adaptation and enhance performance, around align actions and strategic priorities founded in energizing and motivating employees, unifying people with shared goals and a higher mission and shaping and guiding behavior (Daft, 2013).
Based on the findings if this study, leaders in PSFs should be committed to establishing a strong culture for sustainability and legacy that addresses effectively and efficiently the challenging business trends of increased pressure for global services, expansion of services location, and delivery of integrated services, investment in technology and significant increases in the cost of attracting, retaining and rewarding for human resources. These trends associated challenges get compounded by the increasing use of technology, shortage of skilled professionals, aging workforce, and increasing the number of careers over a lifetime, generational diversity, and multiculturalism (Strumpf et al., 2002; Bennett & Bush, 2009).

The participants shared concepts about the importance in their PSF to understand how orientations of engineering leadership require knowledgeable leaders with well-developed technical problem solving skills to guide and assist their peers. This helps to build a collaborative approach that optimizes operations and uses entrepreneurial thinking in order to bring technically sound ideas or organizational innovation in their projects and services (Rottman et al., 2015).

In addition, several practical implications for business practice can be learned from this study for the benefit of PSFs in North American metropolises. The needed practices in the organizations require their leadership to understand the desirable leadership characteristics and applying them in their professional and personal lives. The creation of strategic plans that include the necessary training for the leaders and emerging leaders is important in the approach to create a culture that fosters sustainability for the development and retention of leaders in the organizations.

The strategic plans in PSFs require not only a desirable leadership characteristics training program but implementation programs of accountability and mentorship for all employees in the
organizations. Furthermore, these plans must include the understanding of the current business environment to develop the needed business methods to create the needed sustainability culture in PSFs.

The desirable leadership characteristics shared by the leaders and emerging leaders in this PSF were based on their personal experiences and training received throughout their career about leadership theory concepts. Some of them, which are part of the leaders’ group in this study, participated in the emerging leaders’ seminar version that took place until 2008 and used the book *Leading from the Heart* (Kahl, 2004) that fosters the servant leadership theory. The emerging leader group, who participated in the 2016-2017 emerging leader seminar, used the book *Leadership Challenge* (Kouzes & Posner, 2002) that fosters the transformational leadership theory.

The study provides a foundation of knowledge for desirable leadership characteristics needed to foster PSFs sustainability and legacy and pursue the creation of a culture with leaders that behave and demonstrate in their lives these characteristics to foster the development and retention of leaders and emerging leaders in their organizations (Spector, 2013). Thus, desirable leadership characteristics in the leaders in these organizations influence reform, policy implementation and other organizational outcomes using high-level focus on strategy. These leaders set the path of organizational success by fostering goal clarity and the development of a culture for the right organizational conditions (Moynihan et al., 2011).

The researcher findings can be considered for use by leaders in consulting engineering PSFs along with others knowledge based firms in North America metropolises. This will help these organizations to foster a culture with desirable leadership characteristics for sustainability and legacy to develop and retain leaders.
**Biblical Framework**

The participants shared about the importance about the leaders in the organization to be transparent with the capability of building one to one relationships, and fostering team/family and organizational synergies. Thus, meeting the intent of the leadership model by Jesus that consists of personal leadership or inside perspective in accordance with Matthew 3:13-4:11, One to One Leadership or trust in accordance with Matthew 4:18-24, team/family leadership or community/legacy in accordance with Matthew 10:5-10 and organizational/community leadership or effectiveness/reconciliation in accordance with Matthew 28:19-20 (Blanchard & Hodges, 2003) is considered. This leadership model is a lifetime call by God to fulfill the purpose of the leader for the glory and honor of God. Sanders (1994) quoted John Mott in his statement that “leadership is the sense of rendering maximum service; leadership is the sense of the largest unselfishness; is the sense of full hearted absorption in the greatest work of the world: building up the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ” (p. 32).

The leadership model by Christ is the God given directive for believers to follow. Clinton (1988) explained the importance for the leaders to follow what God wants them to be, involved in raising up their leaders and in tune with God’s purpose for them. The servant leader serves the team by having a God given character (e.g., credibility, integrity, values, self-respect and confidence), learning (acquiring the knowledge for success), creativity (crafting a vision they understand and are motivated to follow, drive (bring passion and energy), courage (taking risks and standing up to your fears), caring (care and motivate the team by understanding their needs), and discipline (keep the focus to execute and succeed; Kahl, 2004).
Leadership Field of Study

The participants in the study indicated their desire to lead with moralistic and honest behavior within an environment of open communication to give all stakeholders a sense of importance, value, trustworthiness and proper citizen behavior with all individuals in the organization (Marques, 2015). Thus, the need to establish relationships based on transparency, sharing, and objective analysis of the relevant information for proper decision making. This approach requires for leaders to act genuinely in a courteous way, by cultivating their credibility, and by being honest, respectful, trustful, thus creating an enhanced environment among their employees that fosters their creativity, commitment and respectfulness (Semedo et al., 2016).

The leaders and emerging leaders indicated their desire to the success of the organization and all its stakeholders with the general understanding of valuing and developing people, practicing transparency in leadership, building community, providing leadership for the good of the followers and sharing status of power (Spears, 1996). They also indicated their desire to stimulate and inspire the followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes in their work initiatives with values and ideas that support the greater good of the organization and their individuals rather than self-agenda and interest (Robbins & Coulter, 2007; Daft, 2013).

The study findings provide contributions to the academic field of leadership with insights about authentic, servant, and transformational leadership theories practical implications to address the development and retention of leaders in consulting engineering PSFs. In addition, the results can also be considered and used for practical implications in other knowledge based PSFs in North America metropolises based on the same business environment these firms have in common to the one in this study. This study helps in closing the gap of knowledge between the field of leadership and practical implications for professional practice in these organizations.
**Recommendations for Action**

The desirable leadership characteristics findings in this study impact the leadership in organizations similar to the one where the participants are leaders. In addition, the findings can also be used in other non-consulting engineering professional service firms such as accounting firms, architectural firms, advertising agencies, business consulting firms, computer firms, law firms, and software firms, since staff turnover remains an issue in PSFs, thus, the importance to create recruiting and retention strategies that target the talent needs that are relevant for these organizations.

Leadership in these organizations require managing the talented people properly, with the correct delegation of complex jobs and assignments to individuals, and the capacity of handling them to be high performance. This requires that all employees in PSFs engage in their culture process by (a) work participation, (b) involving people in decision concerning their work to create job satisfaction, (c) shifting power in the organization among leadership, managers and employees, (d) working in a team rather than a silo approach, and (e) working to solve problems that are difficult and challenging (Mukhi, 1980). Thus, the need to continually evaluate if the current approaches to leaders and emerging leaders talent management are affordable, delivering or not delivering and missing opportunities (Coulson-Thomas, 2012).

The study was disseminated by (a) providing one copy of the final document to each of the participants in the study, (b) making it available for the good of humanity via Liberty University Digital Commons and ProQuest, and (c) publishing a book on the subject two years after this study work is published by ProQuest. In addition, the researcher intends to publish articles in scholarly journals and professional magazines, and to present the study information in professional conferences and seminars for the benefit of all PSFs’ stakeholders. Following are
recommended actions for consideration by leaders in PSFs. The order shown is not intended to be followed as a guide in which the recommendations are to be implement, but just to provide an organized way to identified each of action items.

Action 1. Corporate leaders, board of directors’ members, operations’ directors, and senior leaders in knowledge based PSFs are encouraged to study and understand this study content to help them examine their organization leadership characteristics and create necessary strategies to implement changes where necessary. Thus, the importance for training about these leadership theories and associated traits and processes by instructors who can present to the organization this study content in several sessions: (a) leadership traits and processes, (b) leadership theories, and (c) leadership practical implications in PSFs.

The following steps are suggested to implement this recommendation: (a) board of directors or executive committee leadership in the organization appoints a committee to oversee this recommendation; (b) the appointed committee will develop an action plan to assign instructors for the training, review the teaching content and create the schedule to implement the training; (c) present the plan for the approval by the board of directors; and (d) implement the plan upon approval.

Action 2. Evaluate existing coaching, emerging leaders and mentoring programs to apply the concepts from this study to leverage leaders’ desirable characteristics and align them with organizational competencies for the leaders and emerging leaders in the organization. Thus, PSFs’ corporate support groups can use the desirable characteristics lists to include them across all content in the training initiatives to create a base line for leaders and emerging leaders in the organizations.
The following steps are suggested to implement this recommendation: (a) board of directors or executive committee leadership in the organization appoints a committee to oversee this recommendation, (b) this committee will review the organization existing leadership competencies and determine the desirable leadership characteristics’ list per this study findings, (c) the appointed committee will create an action plan to promote these characteristics companywide, (d) present the plan for approval by the board of directors, and (e) implement the plan upon approval.

Action 3. Evaluate the existing recruiting and retention strategies, considering the findings in this study, to address staff turnover and target the talent needs that are relevant. Thus, PSFs’ corporate support groups can incorporate the desirable leadership characteristics from the study in the assessments and interviews to recruit new leaders for the organization and to determine who the leaders and emerging leaders ought to be in the organization.

The following steps are suggested to implement this recommendation: (a) board of directors or executive committee leadership in the organization appoints a committee to oversee this recommendation, (b) this committee will revise or create new strategies in the organization for development and retention of leaders and emerging leaders in accordance with the study findings,(c) the appointed committee will create an action plan to promote these strategies companywide, (d) present the plan for approval by the board of directors, and (e) implement the plan upon approval.

Action 4. PSFs corporate leaders and board of directors’ members are encouraged to foster a culture with authentic leaders and emerging leaders who are authentic and humble by practicing desirable characteristics recognize the gifts and talents of others and call them through empowering actions. These leaders manifest behaviors of being honest and sincere with others,
admitting mistakes, and telling others the truth to reflect their personal values. Thus, PSFs can foster accountability groups and training sessions for the stakeholders in the organization to share about authentic leadership best practices and experiences.

The following steps are suggested to implement this recommendation: (a) board of directors or executive committee leadership in the organization appoints a committee to oversee this recommendation, (b) this committee will review the organization existing accountability practices and develop strategies to establish accountability groups to a culture that fosters a culture with authentic leaders and emerging leaders who are authentic and humble by practicing desirable characteristics recognize the gifts and talents of others and call them through empowering actions, (c) the appointed committee will create an action plan to promote these accountability groups companywide, (e) present the plan for approval by the board of directors, and (e) implement the plan upon approval.

Action 5. PSFs corporate leaders and board of directors’ members are encouraged to foster a culture with servant leaders and emerging leaders who care, have integrity and high ethics, and are interested in and capable of building long term relationships with stakeholders. Thus, PSFs can foster accountability groups and training sessions for the stakeholders in the organization to share about servant leadership best practices and experiences. This action item follows the same steps as action item 4.

Action 6. PSFs corporate leaders and board of directors’ members are encouraged to foster a culture with transformational leaders and emerging leaders who can communicate effectively, and create a sense of ownership, inventiveness and a dynamic work environment, among their followers with share responsibility to attain organizational goals and the individuals’ aspirations and needs. Thus, PSFs can foster accountability groups and training sessions for the
stakeholders in the organization to share about transformational leadership best practices and experiences. This action item follows the same steps as action item 4.

Action 7. PSFs corporate leaders and board of directors’ members are encouraged to foster a culture in which humility plays a significant role in the decision making process when considering that leaders will exhibit self-knowledge, character, stability, capacity for improvement and team work. Thus, PSFs can foster accountability groups and training sessions for the stakeholders in the organization to share about humility in leadership best practices and experiences. This action item follows the same steps as action item 4.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

There are several recommendations for further study regarding practice and knowledge, based on the desirable leadership characteristics in PSFs in North American metropolises, as they relate to improving business practices for consideration. The order as shown is not intended to be followed as a guide in which the recommendations are to be implemented, but just to provide an organized way to identify each of them. The approach to implementing desirable leadership characteristics in PSFs requires their leadership considering the continuous changes and evolution, of our contemporary society and global world environments that are complex, multiple and interrelated, thus requiring a complex planning and design elements process of organizations and their structure (Daft, 2013). The understanding and implementation of desirable leadership characteristics in PSFs can be challenging and more difficult for organizations when dealing with these environments, thus the following recommendations for further study are considered:
Recommendation 1. The study of how leadership traits and processes support the role and functions of leaders and their personalities in PSFs, thus understanding if there is a relationship between the leaders’ personality and desirable leadership characteristics.

Recommendation 2. The study of how leadership traits and processes support the role and functions of leaders and their cultural background in PSFs, thus understanding if there is a relationship between the leaders’ cultural background and desirable leadership characteristics.

Recommendation 3. The study of specific leadership theories, authentic, servant and transformational, and how they are practiced, implemented, and understood in PSFs, thus understanding how a specific leadership theory is practiced in the context of a knowledge based organization.

Recommendation 4. The study of written and face to face interviews assessment tools to determine those most beneficial to leaders and emerging leaders, thus helping in understanding their beliefs and behaviors associated with good desirable leadership characteristics for the leadership in PSFs organizations to make decisions about who is best suited for leadership positions in these organization.

Recommendation 5. The study can be replicated in PSFs other than consulting engineering firms, PSFs located in specific geographical regions in North America and non PSFs related industries to understand desirable leadership characteristics in these organizations.

Reflections

The researcher’s 35 years of experience as a consulting engineer, with 32 of them working in PSFs, provided a firsthand knowledge about being a follower and or a leader in these organizations. Thus, the researcher observed during these years leaders who did or did not
follow desirable leadership characteristics and the associated positive or negative effects of their leadership practices.

The biblical worldview by the researcher could be seen by some as a bias, for the beliefs associated with it and misunderstandings and misperceptions about this worldview by many, but it actually encouraged the researcher to see and treat the participants with respect and consideration regardless of their worldview. The biblical worldview teaches examples by Paul showing respect and being non-imposing while witnessing to people in high places in the government of his time about his beliefs and as shown in the biblical narrative in Acts 24:1-26:32. The researched fostered conversations in which agree to disagree is a common ground to have open leadership conversations about topics affecting the current business environments that can become controversial between individuals. This approach helped the researcher with the possibility of dealing with stakeholders in PSFs who might not embrace good leadership practices, but have self-centered motivations which affect sustainability and legacy in these organizations.

The researcher understood the limited time availability that the participants had, due to their business and personal demands, to participate in the research, thus was pleased to receive a most welcome participation of 91.65% for the emerging leaders and 84.6% for the leaders. The participants did expressed the intent to foster a culture where leaders show: (a) self-awareness, seeking improvement, and awareness about those being led and looking for their welfare; (b) high degree of trust by building an ethical and moral framework; and (c) the construct of social values (Whitehead, 2009). This overall approach is very promising for the initiatives associated with sustainability and legacy by these participants’ PSF.
The participants also expressed their agreement with the intent of the concept that their PSF is providing services that enable communities to flourish and serve their employees by providing them with opportunities to express their God given talents and abilities in meaningful and creative work (Van Duzer, 2010).

**Summary and Study Conclusions**

This study addressed the problem of development and retention of leaders faced by knowledge based PSFs in North America metropolises, thus it determined desirable leadership characteristics needed to develop and retain a sufficient leader base for these organizations for sustainability and succession planning in decades to come. The participants in the research are leaders and emerging leaders in a PSF with operations in several metropolises in North America that were selected to help their organization leadership with information for the study that can be used to implement the needed philosophy and culture to achieve efficient and effective leadership development and retention in their organization and other knowledge base PSFs.

The findings provided the foundation for the leadership in PSFs to foster authentic leaders who are meaningful and ethical, with higher moral maturity and aspiration or purpose, reflect on collective goals, develop self-awareness and go beyond their self-interest (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999); servant leaders who foster the development of teams by inspiring and creating moral confidence in their members, thus creating an environment of collaboration in the achievement of organizational goals (Van Dierendock, 2011); and transformational leaders who foster change, create and share a compelling vision with all stakeholders, guide through adaptation and pride the inspiration to achieve the changes in accordance with the goal for the organization (Carter et al., 2013).
The study provides leaders in knowledge based PSFs with information to understand the foundation to determine desirable leadership characteristic to address the problem of development and retention of leaders in these organizations for their sustainability and legacy. The review of scholarly sources associated with these organizations’ leadership environment and practices, along with the changes and challenges faced in business strategies, was addressed. In addition, the authentic, servant and transformational leadership theories are analyzed in view of the study conceptual framework purpose, nature, conceptual framework and significance of the study were analyzed.

This study project method and design can be replicated to conduct similar research on knowledge based PSFs other than consulting engineering and even some other business organizations if the proper adjustments in the foundation of the study are carefully considered for the population and sampling, data collection analysis, technique and reliability, and validity before engaging in the research. The practical implications to professional practice provide with leadership characteristic for a good leader and specific characteristics for leaders in areas to develop future generation of leaders, retain future generation of leaders, foster a culture of legacy and sustainability, foster authentic leadership, foster servant leadership, and foster transformational leadership.

The researcher also addressed the applications for professional practice in the areas of business, biblical worldview and leadership field of study to help PSFs to create strategies and goals with desirable leadership characteristics that develop and retain the leaders that make these organization sustainable with legacy for decades to come. In addition, recommendations for actions and further study were provided along with the researcher reflections on personal views. The study provided with desirable leadership characteristics and associated information needed
in knowledge based PSFs to succeed with the correct culture and legacy during these in the challenging business environments and times in North American metropolises during the first part of this 21st century.
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Appendix A: Interview Questions - Leaders

The study explores the perceptions among leaders, at various levels of a professional services firm (PSF) in a metropolis in North America, to determine desirable leadership characteristics needed to develop a sufficient leader base, for the organization’s sustainability in retention and succession planning in decades to come. Thus the following interview questions are for the leaders of the PSF participating in the study:

- What do you think are the characteristics of a good leader?
  - Do you find good leaders role models in the organization?
  - Can you give a practical examples of some of these role models’ leadership characteristics and behaviors?
  - Do you consider yourself a good leader role model?
  - Which leadership characteristics do you display as a good leader?
  - Can you give practical examples of some of your good leaders characteristics and behaviors?

- What do you think are the characteristics of a leader who develops future generations of leaders?
  - Do you find leaders who promote developing future generations of leaders in the organization?
  - Can you give practical examples of these leaders’ characteristics and behaviors in developing future generations of leaders?
  - Do you consider yourself a leader who fosters developing future generations of leaders?
d. Which leadership characteristics do you display in fostering the development of future leaders?

e. Can you give a practical examples of how you foster developing future generations of leaders?

- What do you think are the characteristics a leader must have to retain future generations of leaders?
  a. Do you find leaders who promote the retention of future generations of leaders in the organization?
  b. Can you give a practical examples of these leaders’ characteristics and behaviors in retaining future generations of leaders?
  c. Do you consider yourself a leader who fosters retaining future generations of leaders?
  d. Which leadership characteristics do you display in fostering the retention of leaders?
  e. Can you give a practical examples of how you foster retaining future generations of leaders?

- What do you think are the characteristics of a leader who fosters a culture with a legacy for organization sustainability beyond him or herself?
  a. Do you find leaders who promote a culture of legacy in the organization?
  b. Can you give practical examples of these leaders’ characteristics and behaviors in fostering a culture with a legacy for the organizations sustainability?
  c. Do you consider yourself a leader who fosters a culture of legacy in the organization?
  d. Which leadership characteristics do you display in fostering a culture of legacy in the organization?
e. Can you give a practical examples of how you foster a culture of legacy in the organization?

- How do you describe a leader who is trustworthy and believable?
  a. Do you find leaders who are trustworthy and believable in the organization?
  b. Can you give a practical examples of some of these leaders’ characteristics and behaviors in the organization?
  c. Do you consider yourself a leader who is trustworthy and believable?
  d. Which leadership characteristics do you display in being trustworthy and believable?
  e. Can you give practical examples of how you show being believable and trustworthy?

- How do you describe a leader who help others with honesty and treat them fairly?
  a. Do you find leaders who help others with honesty and treat them fairly in the organization?
  b. Can you give practical examples of some of these leaders’ characteristics and behaviors in the organization?
  c. Do you consider yourself a leader who helps others with honesty and treat them fairly?
  d. Which leadership characteristics do you display in helping others with honesty and treat them fairly?
  e. Can you give practical examples of how you help others with honesty and treat them fairly?

- How do you describe a leader who empowers followers and nurtures them?
  a. Do you find leaders who empower followers and nurture them in the organization?
b. Can you give a practical examples of some of these leaders’ characteristics and behaviors in the organization?

c. Do you consider yourself a leader who empowers followers and nurtures them?

d. Which leadership characteristics do you display in empowering followers and nurturing them?

e. Can you give practical examples of how you empower followers and nurture them?
Appendix B: Interview Questions - Emerging Leaders

Interview Questions - Emerging Leaders

The study explores the perceptions among leaders, at various levels of a professional services firm (PSF) in a metropolis in North America, to determine desirable leadership characteristics needed to develop a sufficient leader base, for the organization’s sustainability in retention and succession planning in decades to come. Thus the following interview questions are for the leaders of the PSF participating in the study:

- What do you think are the characteristics of a good leader?
  - Do you find good leaders role models in the organization?
  - Can you give a practical examples of some of these role models’ leadership characteristics and behaviors?
  - Do you consider yourself a good leader role model?
  - Which leadership characteristics do you display as a good emerging leader?
  - Can you give practical examples of some of your good leader characteristics and behaviors?

- What do you think are the characteristics of a leader who develops future generations of leaders?
  - Do you find leaders who promote developing future generations of leaders in the organization?
  - Can you give practical examples of these leaders’ characteristics and behaviors in developing future generations of leaders?
  - Do you consider yourself an emerging leader who will foster developing future generations of leaders?
i. Which leadership characteristics will you display in fostering the development of future leaders?

j. Can you give a practical examples of how you will foster developing future generations of leaders?

- What do you think are the characteristics a leader must have to retain future generations of leaders?

f. Do you find leaders who promote the retention of future generations of leaders in the organization?

g. Can you give a practical example of these leaders’ characteristics and behaviors in retaining future generations of leaders?

h. Do you consider yourself an emerging leader who will foster retaining future generations of leaders?

i. Which leadership characteristics will you display in fostering the retention of leaders?

j. Can you give a practical example of how you will foster retaining future generations of leaders?

- What do you think are the characteristics of a leader who fosters a culture with a legacy for organization sustainability beyond him or herself?

f. Do you find leaders who promote a culture of legacy in the organization?

g. Can you give practical examples of these leaders’ characteristics and behaviors in fostering a culture with a legacy for the organizations sustainability?

h. Do you consider yourself an emerging leader who will foster a culture of legacy in the organization?
i. Which leadership characteristics will you display in fostering a culture of legacy in the organization?

j. Can you give a practical example of how you will foster a culture of legacy in the organization?

• How do you describe a leader who is trustworthy and believable?

f. Do you find leaders who are trustworthy and believable in the organization?

g. Can you give a practical example of some of these leaders’ characteristics and behaviors in the organization?

h. Do you consider yourself an emerging leader who is trustworthy and believable?

i. Which leadership characteristics will you display in being trustworthy and believable?

j. Can you give practical examples of how you will show being believable and trustworthy?

• How do you describe a leader who help others with honesty and treat them fairly?

f. Do you find leaders who help others with honesty and treat them fairly in the organization?

g. Can you give practical examples of some of these leaders’ characteristics and behaviors in the organization?

h. Do you consider yourself an emerging leader who helps others with honesty and treat them fairly?

i. Which leadership characteristics will you display in helping others with honesty and treating them fairly?
j. Can you give practical examples of how you will help others with honesty and treat them fairly?

- How do you describe a leader who empowers followers and nurtures them?
  
f. Do you find leaders who empower followers and nurture them in the organization?

g. Can you give a practical examples of some of these leaders’ characteristics and behaviors in the organization?

h. Do you consider yourself an emerging leader who empowers followers and nurtures them?

i. Which leadership characteristics will you display in empowering followers and nurturing them?

j. Can you give practical examples of how you will empower followers and nurture them?
Appendix C: Consent Form

Consent Form

21st CENTURY DESIRABLE LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FIRMS IN NORTH AMERICA METROPOLISES

Ralph Baeza
Liberty University
School of Business Administration

You are invited to be in a research study to analyze perceptions among leaders at various levels of the organization, to determine desirable leadership characteristics needed to develop a sufficient leader base, for the organization sustainability in succession planning in decades to come. You were selected as a possible participant because of your years of experience as a leader in your organization. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Ralph Baeza, a doctoral candidate for the DBA in the School of Business Administration at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions among leaders, at various levels of a professional services firm (PSF) in metropolises in North America, to determine desirable leadership characteristics needed to develop a sufficient leader base, for the organization sustainability in retention and succession planning in decades to come. The study follows a team approach with two key elements: (1) top management commitment and (2) cultural transformation. Thus the following research question is addressed in this dissertation:

- Which are the desirable leadership characteristics needed to retain and develop leaders in the organization?

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Receive questions via email and review them to be ready for the interview. This task might take approximate 20 minutes.
2. Participate in the go to meeting interview. This task might take approximate 50 minutes.
3. Complete the answer to each of the questions and send the written questionnaire document to the researcher within a week after the interview. This task might take 40 to 50 minutes.

Risks and Benefits of Participation: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive, from taking part in this study, are increasing knowledge of desirable leadership characteristics that benefit retention and development of leaders in your organization.
Benefits to society include analyzing the applicable authentic, servant and transformational leadership theories, desirable leadership characteristics to address the problem associated with leaders’ development and retention in PSFs in North America metropolises. It provides some contributions, in both the academic and business world, in the areas of desirable leadership characteristics and their effect in leaders’ development and retention practices that affect organizational design and the proper implementation of organizational change in PSFs for their sustainability.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Each leader emerging leaders that is interviewed will be differentiated as Leader 1, 2, 3, 4,…, 12 and s Emerging Leader 1, 2, 3, 4,…, 12 respectively for the data collection and representation. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. I may share the data I collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data.

- The interview will be conducted using go to meeting, between the researcher and each of the participants, from their private offices. No other person(s) will be allowed to participate or be present during the interview.
- Data will be stored on a password protected computer for 3 years, and only the researcher will have access to it. Upon the completion of this period, the data will be destroyed using a shredder.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Ralph Baeza. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at 954.249.5693. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty advisor, Dr. Gene Sullivan at grsulliv@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

(Note: Do not agree to participate unless IRB approval information with current dates has been added to this document.)
Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date
Appendix D: Email Participation Request - Leaders

[Insert Date]

[Recipient]
[Title]
[Company]
[Address 1]
[Address 2]
[Address 3]

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Business Administration at Liberty University, and part of the requirements for a DBA degree, I am conducting a research to better understand organizational leadership in professional services firms. The purpose of my research is to explore the desirable leadership characteristics, based in leadership, organizational and implementing organizational change theories, needed in a professional services firm (PSF) located in large metropolises in North America. This is in order to achieve sustainable and legacy practical implications, which develop and retain organizational leaders, for the present and future of the organization.

I am writing to invite you to request your participation in my study, since you are a leader in the organization of study. Your participation will be completely private, and no personal, identifying information will be disclosed to others. You will complete and return the attached consent document to me if you wish to participate in an interview, using go to meeting, for about 50 minutes. The interview questions will be sent to you ahead of the interview, and you will be required to provide written answer to them within a week after the interview takes place. If you choose to participate, you will receive a copy of my dissertation.

Sincerely,

Ralph Baeza
Principal and Senior Electrical Engineer
Appendix E: Email Participation Request – Emerging Leaders

[Insert Date]

[Recipient]
[Title]
[Company]
[Address 1]
[Address 2]
[Address 3]

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Business Administration at Liberty University, and part of the requirements for a DBA degree, I am conducting a research to better understand organizational leadership in professional services firms. The purpose of my research is to explore the desirable leadership characteristics, based in leadership, organizational and implementing organizational change theories, needed in a professional services firm (PSF) located in large metropolises in North America. This is in order to achieve sustainable and legacy practical implications, which develop and retain organizational leaders, for the present and future of the organization.

I am writing to invite you to request your participation in my study, since you are a leader in the organization of study. Your participation will be completely private, and no personal, identifying information will be disclosed to others. You will complete and return the attached consent document to me if you wish to participate in an interview, using go to meeting, for about 50 minutes. The interview questions will be sent to you ahead of the interview, and you will be required to provide written answer to them within a week after the interview takes place. If you choose to participate, you will receive a copy of my dissertation.

Sincerely,

Ralph Baeza
Principal and Senior Electrical Engineer
Appendix F: Phone Call Participation Request - Leaders

Good Morning [Recipient]:

Hope you are doing well. As a graduate student in the School of Business Administration at Liberty University, and part of the requirements for a DBA degree, I am conducting a research to better understand organizational leadership in professional services firms. The purpose of my research is to explore the desirable leadership characteristics, based in leadership, organizational and implementing organizational change theories, needed in a professional services firm (PSF) located in large metropolises in North America. This is in order to achieve sustainable and legacy practical implications, which develop and retain organizational leaders, for the present and future of the organization.

I am inviting you to participate in my study, since you are a leader in the organization of study. Your participation will be completely private, and no personal, identifying information will be disclose to others. You will complete and return a consent document to participate in an interview, using go to meeting, for about 50 minutes. The interview questions will be sent to you ahead of the interview, and you will be required to provide written answer to them within a week after the interview takes place. If you choose to participate, you will receive a copy of my dissertation.

Sincerely,

Ralph Baeza
Principal and Senior Electrical Engineer
Appendix G: Phone Call Participation Request - Emerging Leaders

Good Morning [Recipient]:

Hope you are doing well. As a graduate student in the School of Business Administration at Liberty University, and part of the requirements for a DBA degree, I am conducting a research to better understand organizational leadership in professional services firms. The purpose of my research is to explore the desirable leadership characteristics, based in leadership, organizational and implementing organizational change theories, needed in a professional services firm (PSF) located in large metropolises in North America. This is in order to achieve sustainable and legacy practical implications, which develop and retain organizational leaders, for the present and future of the organization.

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Sincerely,

Ralph Baeza
Principal and Senior Electrical Engineer