

## After Newton: Emerging Patterns of Leadership

Values, according to a former senior executive, were central at Southwest Airlines, but they just happened. Do values 'just happen'? How do leaders promote them? Today's business world, especially in the West, is dominated by an implicit Newtonian worldview of cause and effect. If management acts, then planned outcomes will be the result. But alternative perspectives offer new insights – and challenges – to leaders throughout the world.

Viewing organizations as ecosystems emphasises the importance of relationships and boundaries. Complexity theory introduces the power of emergence and self-organization. In such a world, traditional slogans face new challenges: 'Make it happen' is confronted by 'Let it happen'. And how can we speak of 'change management' when biologists tell us we cannot direct living systems, only disturb them? Such new perspectives offer profound challenges to leaders: liberating to some, frightening to others.

Using cases studies from participants in the financial tsunami to a European utility, from logistics to the military, we will explore roots of significant improvements in performance. We will see how small acts can have large-scale effects. We will reflect how consistent leadership at all levels is illuminated by the use of fractals: repeating patterns, which offer a vivid new perspective on the global vs local debate. As governments and regulators seek to control, we will observe unintended consequences from ancient religious codes to the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. In conclusion, we will confront a major challenge to this approach using examples from the political history of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

Tim Harle has been a senior executive in a FTSE100 company, was the first non-family board member in a family owned SME, and has worked with government ministers. Two threads running throughout his career have been leadership and change. He now writes, lectures and provides consultancy advice on these themes, using insights from complexity theory, ecology and psychology. Tim is an Associate of Bristol Business School, where he is Course Director for the innovative *Leading through Complexity* executive short course. He has contributed to four books on leadership, including *Leadership: The Key Concepts* (Routledge 2008) and had articles published in *Business Leadership Review* and *Business Ethics: European Review*. A graduate of Cambridge University, Tim undertook advanced management studies at INSEAD.