O lder than the Neolithic Era and newer than the New Millennium, leadership continues to fascinate and perplex. Are leaders born or built to order? Should they be incubated or tested by fire? What's a leadership developer to do?

Our authors say take a deep breath and then a deep look at some of the assumptions and development practices that are slowing down the process of finding and keeping exemplary leaders. Not enough companies build their leaders to align their performance with actual business needs, surprising as that may sound. Many programs for developing leaders work from competencies or behaviors that are not just outdated but irrelevant to the global, Internet economy. Many leaders reach the top jobs unable to craft suitable e-business strategies, woo investors, or court favor with Wall Street. It's far better, they say, to begin with your company's business strategies and then develop leaders with the attributes you need to make those strategies reality.

In five articles from veteran leadership experts, we offer step-by-step plans for creating more real-world leadership programs that will return more of your training investment. You'll read about how to build an acceleration pool, how to put together consortia for developing leaders through local universities, and how to be a "leader-builder" company.

Jim O'Toole, former editor of *New Management* magazine and author of *Leadership A to Z,* closes out our leadership roundup with some surprising advice: Let's stop looking for leaders with charisma and other characteristics prized in another era and instead seek out leaders who are "appropriately ambitious" and develop them as teachers, not doers.