**Report Details Leadership Views of Both C-Suite Executives and Millennial Leaders**

New, rare research examines Millennial leaders’ views on leadership

January 10, 2017 – Today, in conjunction with RW2 Enterprises and Development Dimensions International (DDI), The Conference Board released the report, *Divergent Views/Common Ground: The Leadership Perspectives of C-Suite Executives and Millennial Leaders*. The findings result from interviews, surveys, and focus groups with Millennial leaders, CEOs, and other non-Millennial leaders at the following 14 organizations: Aetna, American Express, athenahealth, The Boeing Company, Cardinal Health, Humana, Johnson & Johnson, Kindred Healthcare, KPMG, Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America, United Rentals, UPS, Verizon Communications, and Xerox.

The research comes in the wake of an extensive, ongoing departure of Baby Boomers from the U.S. workforce. With each passing day, Millennial leaders assume an increasing role in steering both the nation’s economy and the organizations that comprise it. Yet the subject of their leadership lacks adequate research, with widespread assumptions painting an often inaccurate picture. As such, this research sheds light on their leadership values and preferences; where they agree with and differ from other leadership cohorts and generations; and in light of the findings, what steps organizations can take for enhanced performance.

“These young leaders will ultimately sit in every leadership seat at every U.S. corporation,” said Ronald A. Williams, CEO of RW2 Enterprises. “The U.S. GDP is currently tipping the scales at ~$18 trillion, and the global economy continues to become increasingly more challenging. It was my view that not only were we missing critical research on Millennial leaders, but we also were missing a fact-based analysis of how Millennial leaders’ views differed from current CEOs and C-suite executives. Their differences are not necessarily right or wrong, but understanding how to bridge between the two will be crucial to the future of our economy.”

Contrary to conventional thought, Millennial leaders hold much in common with other generations and CEOs. However, some significant differences exist, which include but are not limited to the following:

- In the eyes of Millennial leaders, a future leader succeeds globally through adeptness at the interpersonal and interaction facets of leadership. CEOs see an ideal future leader as one who focuses more on efficient decision-making and business know-how.

- While Millennial leaders care about social values, including organizations contributing to a cleaner environment and giving back to the community, somewhat surprisingly, CEOs place a bigger premium on these.

- Millennial leaders have different workplace design preferences than CEOs think: they do not want low-hierarchy organizational structures or open design.

“In light of rising global competition and seismic demographic shifts, organizations must place a laser-like focus on cultivating their Millennial leaders,” said Rebecca L. Ray, report co-author and Executive Vice President, Knowledge Organization at The Conference Board. “Our new research provides insights to help realize the full potential of these rising stars, along with the organizations of which they will increasingly take the reins.”

Despite their differences, leaders across the spectrum (Millennial, non-Millennial, and CEOs) voiced much agreement, in areas which include but are not limited to the following:

- All place “arrogance and avoidance” as top leadership derailers.

- All rank “engaging and inspiring employees” as the skills that matter most for getting leaders from one level to the next. Among CEOs, these skills were tied with “managing and successfully introducing change.”
• All say that it is important that the company “operates based on ethical values, not just legal obligations;” 
  “preserves the profitability of its business operations” and “takes actions guided by the needs of all 
  stakeholders.”

• All say that “leading through transformation” is the top leadership experience that shapes leadership 
  competence and motivation.

The report also features recommendations for organizations and leaders across generational cohorts. They include 
but are not limited to the following:

• Start or amplify the dialogue to resolve the discrepancy in future leader skills. If organizations turn a blind eye in 
  this area, both Millennial leaders and CEOs will be frustrated with what top leaders become. Millennial leaders 
  will develop themselves in a fashion that may contrast sharply with what today’s CEOs believe is important for 
  successful leadership.

• Reinforce the corporate imperatives of ethics, profitability, stakeholder needs, and environmental 
  responsibility. Research has found that companies with a well-defined social mission tend to outperform their 
  peers in revenue growth.

• Address the “I’ll need to leave if I want to keep ascending” misperception. More so than their older peers, 
  Millennial leaders are more likely to feel that they will need to change organizations to reach the highest 
  leadership level.

“While the similarities in leadership perspectives far outnumber the differences, there are some significant 
  divergent views that need to be addressed,” said Rich Wellins, Senior Vice President of DDI. “Our study assists 
  organizations in addressing the areas of contrast by detailing key, evidence-based practices – ones that will go a 
  long way in better preparing Millennials for higher level leadership positions.”

“CHROs need clear, actionable steps to best develop Millennials, a rapidly growing portion of the workforce,” said 
  Peter Fasolo, Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer of Johnson & Johnson, which participated 
  in the study. “From engagement to mentoring to workplace preferences, this research addresses key components to 
  help organizations maintain or gain an edge.”

Members of The Conference Board can view the report in full here.

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About RW2 Enterprises
RW2 Enterprises advises and coaches CEOs and C-Suite executives on the development of values-based 
transformational leadership strategy and the creation of positive, high-performance cultures. The firm also advises 
on corporate board service for the C-Suite and has coached 190 executives in the course of 2015. The firm’s 
Chairman and CEO, Ron Williams, works with private-sector, public-sector, and nonprofit groups to address critical 
societal needs, including how to transform the U.S. healthcare system so that it creates more value for consumers. 
www.ronwilliams.net
About DDI
DDI is a global human resources consultancy specializing in leadership assessment and development. We help companies transform the way they hire, promote and develop their leaders at every organizational level. Clients include half of the Fortune 500 and multinationals doing business across a vast array of industries from Berlin to Bangalore. We serve clients from 42 offices. www.ddiworld.com

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