

# BROOKINGS

## Executive Education

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### Brookings Executive Education

A Partnership of The Brookings Institution and  
Washington University in St. Louis

## Enhancing Engagement through Meaning, Mission and Purpose



Since 2006, Andrew Shatte, resiliency expert and founder and president of Mindflex, has taught Brookings Executive Education's [Resilience in Leadership](#) course. Class content explores factors that lead to greater employee productivity and engagement.

"It comes as something of a surprise — especially, to people in the private sector — that federal government workers are significantly more resilient than their private-sector peers," Shatte said. "My colleagues and I examined several theories on why this is true. It turns out, the most critical ingredient is a sense of meaning, mission and purpose."

According to Shatte, only 30 percent of private-sector employees believe they contribute to something important at their organization — as opposed to 57 percent of federal government employees who express the same opinion.

His findings are in line with new research from Anjan Thakor, finance professor at Washington University's [Olin Business School](#). *The Harvard Business Review* featured the study in its July/August issue.

Thakor and his co-author, Robert Quinn, professor emeritus of management and organizations at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business, state in [the article](#) that connecting workers to a higher purpose improves organizational performance. The researchers have developed an eight-step framework to advance the practice and avoid what they describe as "the cynical, 'transactional' view of employee motivation."

Brookings Executive Education can deliver a one- or two-day version of Shatte's course, Resilience in Leadership, at [government agencies](#) anywhere in the continental United States. Contact [registrar@brookings.edu](mailto:registrar@brookings.edu) for more information.

## Women's Leadership Network: 10th Year of Program Launched on 10/1



Elisa Basnight has some advice for women in government: Take part in the Brookings Executive Education [Women's Leadership Network](#) (WLN).

The West Point graduate, business executive and former director of the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs' Center for Women Veterans serves as a program speaker and mentor for network participants. "I always say if people want to accomplish something, they need to find someone who has already achieved it and ask how it was done," she said. "WLN connects participants to a community of successful, female role models — in participants' specific cohort and in the larger Brookings/Washington University family."

"Research finds that access to role models benefits career advancement. It's more challenging to be what you can't see, right?" added Basnight.

"Equally important, WLN participants acquire the tools and resources to become role models themselves," says Anna Ramsey-Ewing, who completed WLN in May 2018. "In 2015, I was promoted to director of the Office of Grants Management and Scientific Review at the National Institutes of Health. It was the perfect time for me to reengage in my professional growth and development," she said.

Ramsey-Ewing adds, "The WLN experience was transformational. In the classroom, I was surrounded by wall-to-wall success. I wish I had joined this group of highly accomplished women sooner." Ramsey-Ewing was one of the senior women executives providing career advice to 36 women from across government at the opening session of the 2018-19 WLN.

The WLN curriculum consists of four leadership courses: Visioning and Leading Change, Leading Through Influence, The Art and Science of Negotiation, and Communicating for Success. Participants receive insights on challenges faced by women, along with models and best practices that help them excel in the workplace.

For more information on Brookings Executive Education's [Women's Leadership Network](#), contact [registrar@brookings.edu](mailto:registrar@brookings.edu).

## Excellence in Customer Service: An Agency Success Story

When it comes to client service, William Middleswart, Acting Manager of the Technical On-Boarding Team at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and recent [Master of Science in Leadership](#) graduate, knows that a lack of trust and transparency will never fly — especially with air traffic controllers.

In 2015, the FAA nationalized its hiring and staffing process, eliminating facility managers' ability to select their own new-hire employees. The change affected hiring practices at 314 air traffic control facilities across the country.

"In effect, I became the service provider for field managers who mistrusted headquarters and believed Washington, D.C., policies were out of touch with field operations," Middleswart said. "The difficult situation was the perfect opportunity for me to put [Excellence in Customer Service](#) course content into practice."

Jackson Nickerson, professor of organization and strategy at Washington University's Olin Business School, teaches the Brookings Executive Education class. He begins by explaining the differences between customer and client service. The former is a "misnomer in government." The latter, on the other hand, "solves problems and creates value for citizens and



organizations.”

Nickerson also introduces participants to a government-based lexicon that includes the “client-value-creation chain,” a framework for exploring the roles of clients, frontline workers and leaders. Middleswart took Nickerson’s lessons to heart — and now is a guest speaker for the class.

Middleswart recounts his experiences candidly and emphasizes his results. To ensure air traffic control facilities maintained an optimal staffing level that supported operations as well as career progression, the FAA technical-team manager implemented a Priority Placement Tool. The spreadsheet incorporated information from multiple databases and relied on standardized formulas to calculate current and predicted controller staffing levels.

“My process was data-driven, transparent, repeatable and defensible. It demonstrated that I understood my clients’ business and would help them any way I could.

“Because I viewed the facility managers as clients, instead of as customers, they never believed my service was transactional. We talked, and I provided solutions.”

For more information on the [Excellence in Customer Service](#) course, contact [registrar@brookings.edu](mailto:registrar@brookings.edu).

## UPCOMING COURSES

Most fall courses are full. A few seats are available for the following classes.

- Oct 24-25, 2018 [Finance for Nonfinancial Managers](#)
- Nov 5-6, 2018 [Inspiring Creativity in Organizations](#)
- Dec 3-4, 2018 [Leaders Growing Leaders](#)
- Dec 5-6, 2018 [U.S. National Security Strategy](#)

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