

## **Humor and the Effectiveness of Diverse Leaders**

*Michael Lovaglia, Christabel L. Rogalin, Shane Soboroff and Christopher P. Kelley,*  
University of Iowa

*Jeffrey W. Lucas,* University of Maryland

The appropriate use of humor may increase the effectiveness of leaders, especially non-traditional leaders. Power and status are the building blocks of leadership. Leaders are often in positions of formal power that they may be required to use. Power, however, creates resistance, more so for non-traditional leaders: women and minority group members. Furthermore, because their leadership defies expectations, non-traditional leaders may need to use power more than traditional leaders who can more easily rely on the influence conferred by their high status. Effective leaders convey unpleasant information in ways that reduce group members' resistance to it. Humor has been shown to increase the acceptance of unpleasant information. Thus it may not be coincidence that effective leaders use group-oriented humor more than do less effective leaders. But non-traditional leaders may avoid using humor for fear of being trivialized. If humor, however, operates similarly to self-presentation as group motivated in group processes, then it will have a greater positive effect on the performance of non-traditional than traditional leaders. Experimental tests are proposed.