

## Love Your Employees?

Editorial Article by Terri Luebke  
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A few years ago, I listened to the CEO of a successful organization encourage a room of new leaders to love the fellow human beings who reported to them in order to be effective leaders. He went on to explain that they couldn't fake it because, like children, their employees would be able to sense whether the leaders were sincere. By looking around the room, I could see how his words were resonating with the handful of leaders who possessed the spiritual intelligence to understand his wisdom.

The idea of spirituality (i.e., love) infiltrating the workplace may sound foreign to many of us. To some, spirituality equates solely to prayers, church services and religious traditions. To others, however, spirituality is much more simply defined as anything relating to the soul, the essence of humanity.

In the workplace, spirituality is a framework of organizational values that transcends the traditional, myopic focus upon efficiency and effectiveness. It honors the escalating need for employees to feel fulfilled, complete and joyful about their work. Additionally, it provides a sense of connectedness through a community-oriented perspective of organizational behavior.

The individual leader's role in this new work environment is to support employees' contributions and potential through personal development, caring and brotherhood. This new form of management, which I refer to as Leaderhood™, is a highly respectful form of leadership in which the leader acts as a mentor rather than a hero, exercising spiritual intelligence to elicit people's creativity, commitment and contributions. Spiritual intelligence, in this sense, includes the leader's awareness and desire to:

- Help others perform work that they find purposeful and
- Serve others and to encourage employees to do the same and
- Develop and be a part of a principled community.

Indeed, today's leader bears a novel challenge: Integrate spiritual intelligence into leadership behaviors or become inept at recruiting and retaining the talent necessary to achieve business results. The significance and urgency of this leadership evolution is reinforced by recent studies, which identify the top three demands of the new breed of talent in the workplace (namely, Generation X and Generation Y) as:

- Work that is exciting and fulfilling and
- Growth, learning and career development and
- Great relationships and working with good people.

(In case you are wondering, Mr. or Mrs. Baby Boomer, fair pay is a distant fourth.)

How will leaders adapt to this powerful, intangible and rapidly intensifying shift in today's workplace?

If you are a leader, the good news is that it all begins with you. Your willingness to know yourself, demonstrate vulnerability, operate sincerely and take a genuine interest in the innate talents of others will serve you well in this new world.

If, on the other hand, you find yourself rolling your eyes or cringing from the previous sentence, the bad news is that your ability to cope with the shift to spirituality in the workplace all begins with you. If you have become comfortable with management techniques, power through authority, superficial employee relationships and rote development practices, you may find yourself outgunned by the seemingly high-maintenance members of today's workforce. The old-fashioned methods of command and control, leadership by intimidation and "coachable moments" are no longer enough to capture the loyalty, innovation and creativity of today's workforce. You must find a way to capture and care for their hearts.

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