



Engaging the Heart – People, Profit and Planet

By Mark D. Sauter, author, *Bringing Meaning into Monday™*

Organizations, profit or non-profit, that are capable of fully engaging their employees significantly improve their odds of sustainable success. Yet studies regularly show that compensation alone is not the answer if people are working on activities that yield little value and/or personal fulfillment.

Companies must enable their employees to pitch and run with new ideas – ideas that help to move us toward a sustainable world. In short, make meaning for their employees and allow them the chance to align their personal values with what they do on the job everyday.

*- Stuart L. Hart, Author
Capitalism at the Crossroads*

Like a teeter-totter, life requires weight on both sides in order to make the ride enjoyable. *Self* or material interests (e.g., pay, benefits, career opportunities and status) represent side A, while relationship quality, sense of purpose, and contributing value to the lives of *others* represents side B. Many organizations have become over-reliant on compensation and benefit programs to motivate their employees and improve their quality of life. In turn, they often overlook or under develop the B side. As a result, these organizations fail to fully engage their workforce, head *and* heart, though they may spend a lot of money trying.

The other side

By structurally aligning individual agendas and work practices with organizational priorities, priorities that are focused on delivering value to others, successful organizations continually add weight to the B side. By emphasizing how people, individually and collectively, create value for customers, coworkers and society they achieve balance between individualistic tendencies and interdependent or collaborative ones. As a result, **people**, materially and intrinsically, will become more motivated and engaged due to improved relationship quality and a stronger sense of shared purpose. **Profitability** will improve, as will innovation and growth – necessary to attract the interest of today's leaders. And the **planet** or communities in which we live will be improved as organizations emphasize and reward value creation by aligning personal values with what they do on the job everyday.

Consider for a minute a fully expanded balloon where adding more air would cause it to burst. New air, fresh air, cannot enter until some of the stale air is first

removed. This analogy applies to many organizations. People for the most part are working hard, yet in many cases they may be working on activities that no longer deliver the same degree of value they once did. The stale work remains, yet the *value* the employee and recipients derive from the work is gone.

Many employees and organizations are dealing with stale air. Inconsistent agendas, different interpretations of customer or coworker needs, and lack of prioritization and focus insidiously erodes relationship quality, which in turn erodes employee engagement, creativity, teamwork and productivity. Compensation may temporarily offset the effects of stale air, but not for long. Having good people does not guarantee a strong organization; ensuring good people are focused on the right things does. *Bringing Meaning into Monday™* offers a process that can help organizations achieve it.

Work should give substance, meaning, and value to our lives. It should make us feel that we are contributing to the world, that we are somehow leaving a legacy ... help us focus not on ourselves but others, the beneficiaries of our work. It widens our horizons and connects us with others—with our teammates, with our organization, with our customers.

*- Michael Hammer, Author
Beyond Re-Engineering*

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