



# Having Faith in the Bottom Line

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

*“My entire work experience leads me to believe that people want to find genuine meaning in their work, to believe that they can make a difference in the lives of others ... if our 23,000 employees are motivated by the same common purpose, we will be very successful.”*

- Bill George, Former CEO Medtronic

Employees in developed societies, with their economic needs largely met, seek an increased sense of purpose, knowledge that they are making a positive difference in the lives of others.

Gregg Easterbrook, author of *The Progress Paradox*, stated, “Today the majority of men and women in the U.S. and European Union have acquired the living circumstances, reasonable comfort, and decent health for which previous generations yearned. Therefore, a transition from material want to meaning want is in progress on a historically unprecedented scale – involving hundreds of millions of people – and may eventually be recognized as a principle cultural development of our age.”

## The issue is how

The challenges today may be different, however the solution is not. Historically, social dysfunction was a result of individual interests overshadowing the collective good or shared interests of others. Confucius solved the tribal conflicts in China, and virtually all religions attempted to offer hope in a chaotic world by banding together previously fractured societies or viewpoints. Today, business institutions play an integral role in establishing one's worldview, social values, and sense of meaning and overall happiness. They are poised to lead societal change. Not because they want to, but because they need to.

In today's increasingly complex world, people must be skilled at reconciling differences and dealing with variation. Organizations must be capable of responding to the ever-changing needs of customers and coworkers. And leaders must provide employees with a greater sense of unity and focus, which facilitates greater creativity, cooperation and mutual respect.

Most leaders respect the inherent value of humanistic or faith-based traits such as love, patience, acceptance, and the golden rule, however, they often find it difficult to connect them directly to the bottom line. Therefore, these traits are classified as “soft,” and frequently underemphasized. To be embraced, these

traits must be reinforced via *social structures* (e.g., strategies, work practices and measures) that condition and nurture group relationships. In this case, those relationships found at work.

By *structurally* aligning individual agendas and work practices with organizational priorities, priorities that are focused on delivering value to others, a greater sense of shared purpose will result. This in turn allows people to reconcile differences and discover creative possibilities. They respect diverse contributions within the higher or broader context of how each party contributes to creating and delivering value to others – customers, coworkers and society. In addition to improving bottom-line performance, this will result in a stronger sense of community by focusing attention on how people individually and collectively contribute to improving the lives of others, in and outside the organization.

Faith-based or not, successful organizations will have little difficulty embracing the need to structurally enable the creation and delivery of value. In a manner of speaking, it reflects the essence of business. *Bringing Meaning into Monday™* offers a process that can help organizations achieve it.

*When people focus on the real issue, it creates greater satisfaction instead of divisions and conflicts caused when we lose sight of the wider issues and start bickering among ourselves ... your underlying motivation can change based on this wider perspective and it will build your enthusiasm to work.*

Dalai Lama

*The Art of Happiness at Work*, by Howard C. Cutler, M.D.,

**Mark D. Sauter** is the founder and president of GTP Associates, Inc. With over 25 years of business leadership experience, Mark's work, while with Dow Corning Corporation, was profiled in, *Value Based Marketing for Bottom-Line Success* – McGraw-Hill, 2003. In 2009, Mark released his book entitled *Bringing Meaning Into Monday™: A Sustainable Approach to Bottom Line Success*. Additional information is available at [www.gtpassociates.com](http://www.gtpassociates.com).