

Management Ideas



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a monthly newsletter to key executive-leaders
on practices, possibilities and ideas generally
for stepped up performance
edited by
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on problem-solving and creative ideas

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3674 SPIRITUALITY IN BUSINESS
- 3675 HOT MANAGEMENT TRENDS FOR 1997
- 3676 IDEAS FROM DAVOS
- 3677 WORK-FAMILY PROGRAMMES

3674 SPIRITUALITY IN BUSINESS: To Revolutionise Role Excellence and to Make Winners All. In the past, corporations have shied away from seminars and conferences having anything to do with "spirituality" because there was a preconception that spirituality meant a particular cosmology or set of beliefs. But that is the past. Now, corporations all over the world are making profound changes in order to foster inspiration, productivity, meaning and connection because they recognize that the old "command and control" models no longer work. At the same time, more and more people are starting to realize that fostering spirit in the workplace leads to increased happiness and creativity and increased productivity and profitability.

The Spirituality in Business movement is gaining momentum as can be witnessed by the fact that there are international conferences on

the subject. Companies like IBM, AT&T, Ford Motor Company, (U.S.A.), The Body Shop (England) Hamann B.O.B.V. (Netherlands), Money Matters (New Zealand), Oasis GMBH (German), and the World Bank are participating.

The Third Annual International Conference on Spirituality in Business will be held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, between 8 and 15 November this year. There will be atleast 40 speakers. Most of the speakers are authors of books related to this theme. For example, Lee Bolman (co-author of Leading with the Soul), Richard Barrett, (author of Liberating the Corporate Soul), Martin Rutte (co-author of Chicken Soup for the Soul at Work), Bill DeFoore, (author of Rediscovering the Soul in Business), and Carol Osborn (author of Inner Excellence) will be presenting sessions. The list of tentative speakers includes Deepak Chopra and Jagdish Parikh (of Mumbai).

The conference cost (that includes lodging for 7 nights) ranges from \$995 to \$1295, depending upon how soon you register. For registration, you may mail, fax or phone: The Message Company, 4 Camino Azul, Santa Fe NM 87505 USA Fax 505-471-2584 Phone: 505-474-0998.

We are giving this much information because it is possible some of the Readers may attend the conference and come ready to organise similar ones in India, not merely national but regional. For some years now, we have had conferences on this subject at Mumbai, Rajkot, Mysore and Delhi but they can be treated only as a small beginning. We in India can be great players in this field with our traditional advantage.

(Your Editor's book, NURTURE WITH SPIRITUAL CULTURE THE CORPORATE WORKPLACE, that has been under preparation for over a year, will be shortly released. It carries a valuable foreword by Swami Jitatmananda of Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot.)

3675 HOT MANAGEMENT TRENDS FOR 1997: This is the second part of the story that we published in the April issue.

Balanced scorecard: Another popular measurement system is the

balanced scorecard, which got a boost this fall with the release of a much-awaited book on the subject by the idea's "architects," Robert Kaplan and David Norton. The system is intended to help companies develop and chart longterm strategic goals in a wide variety of financial and non-financial corporate areas beyond basic profitability.

Companies are encouraged to develop a number of goals and then create ways to measure progress toward them. Progress is charted on a "scorecard" that is updated regularly. By keeping the same set of broad strategic goals and communicating them throughout the organization, the method is supposed to encourage a let's-pull-together momentum around a clear set of outcomes.

Measuring intellectual capital: This is a third and final popular measurement system that is slowly spreading to North America from its more established base in Europe. The argument here is that companies measuring the value of their assets have traditionally ignored one of their most valuable possessions, the intellectual capital of employees.

While revenue and earnings chart a company's past performance, proponents of the system say it offers an indication of the future potential locked within a company. It is assessed by measuring factors such as the amount of money spent on training employees and employee satisfaction.

Diversity: Most companies have had anti-discrimination policies for years, and they gave them a boost in the late eighties as sexual harassment became a human resources hot potato. Now, however, many writers are challenging companies to look more deeply into their corporate culture to assess whether they have a broader environment of fairness. Consultants say companies all have unique cultures that contain biases, whether against minorities, working mothers or other groups. And while firms can try to safeguard against cases of overt unfairness toward individuals, it is a much tougher challenge to reshape a broader corporate environment.

The "diversity" consulting niche undoubtedly got a huge boost this fall when the discrimination problems at larger companies such as

Texaco Inc. in the United States gained new prominence. Despite having a thorough anti-discrimination policy in place, Texaco was faced with a barrage of accusations about systemic, sometimes overt racism against blacks and other minority groups.

Company chairman Peter Bijur apologized to all of the company's employees. But experts say it will take time for the company to shift ingrained thinking, especially in its middle and lower management ranks.

Customer service through the telephone: The increasingly popular method for companies to reach or help customers is through the telephone, and call centres are booming. Whether it is a computer company's help line, a food manufacturer's recipe and nutrition advice line or a government department's service information centre, it seems organizations can't get the telephone centres set up quickly enough.

Provinces such as New Brunswick have seen call centres as the wave of the future, and they have offered generous incentives to attract the new breed of business to their locations.

Longer contracts for employees: Managers are demanding and often getting longer labour contracts with their unions. In the first quarter of this year, for example, the average length of collective agreements was 40.3 months, the highest on record. Some of the deals are running to five or six years, especially in natural resource sectors and manufacturing, such as members of the United Steelworkers of America at Hamilton based Stelco Inc. Some unions agree to the deals in exchange for improvements to benefits.

Companies are seeking greater long-term stability for planning, and employees can feel greater job stability, depending on the contract terms.

Spying: Corporate espionage is a growing management strategy for companies willing to do almost anything to get a leap on the competition. There were a number of prominent cases in 1996, both in Canada and the United States. At General Motors Corp., for example, a three-year espionage case involving a former senior

executive led to charges this month in Germany. Closer to home, Newbridge Networks Corp. of Kanata, Ont., said this month that it had uncovered an alleged spy in its ranks. Ontario Provincial Police have laid fraud charges against an employee, claiming he passed along secrets to a competitor.

Growing concerns about espionage, which is most often seen in pharmaceutical, high-tech, chemical and oil patch companies, has spawned an industry of consultants and investigators, helping companies solve crimes and guard against them. There's also a form of legal spying that is growing in popularity. Called competitive intelligence, it allows companies to use available sources of information to compile large amounts of data on rival companies.

The gurus of this discipline are not shady guys in trench coats, they are computer whizzes who know where to find vast arrays of information from public data bases. Other sources of competitive intelligence are press releases and speeches by chief executive officers.

3676 IDEAS FROM DAVOS: *The influence makers may not unite. The fact that they meet and feel each other has significance for all of us. The World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 1997 occurred a few weeks back. Here is an insightful report that appeared in the New York Times.*

DAVOS, the shorthand by which the World Economic Forum's annual jamboree in this ski resort is known, is over for this year. Nelson Mandela, Yasir Arafat, Bill Gates and Jack Welch, among others, spoke. And while they were not talking - in fact, even while they were up there on the podium - the business elite used their view from these Alpine peaks to ponder and discuss where the world is and where it may be going, in forums large and small.

So your company declined to pay the \$20,000 entry fee, plus expenses, to send you to Davos? Do not despair. If Tom Peters, the consultant, can offer "Business School in a Box," surely what goes on in Davos can be summarized in, say, 1200 words. Here's the skinny you need to make it look like you were here.

Think of Davos as a kind of global Renaissance weekend, only bigger, longer (six days) and more serious. With as many as nine

panels happening at once - and many more, somewhat lighter topics (like Chinese medicine and the future of movies and television) programmed for discussion over daily lunches and dinners - Davos is a pot-au-feu of conversation starters and conversation stoppers.

Except for the plenary session speeches, Davos conversation is considered to be off the record. Here, lacking attributions to protect both the innocent and the guilty, are some of the more thought-provoking tidbits.

Globalization: This year's focus may have been "Building the Network Society," but the Globalization Question reigned in the way that the German Question once dominated European politics. No one doubted the inevitability of globalization, which is a product of the triumph of capitalism. But many fear it, for many reasons.

Some see globalization as the villain behind increased poverty, unemployment and inequality. They believe it threatens the sovereignty of nations, especially small ones that feel obliged to court international capital no matter the impact on their social and development agendas. Direct foreign investment, someone pointed out, is growing faster than international trade. Globalization may be harmful, too, because it homogenizes the world's cultures. National cultural differences are being sacrificed on the mega-brand altar of companies like Disney and MTV, which thrive by peddling the same products everywhere.

Paradoxically, some experts say quick and nimble small companies may well end up being more powerful than huge corporate titans that fall behind in technology. One man even predicted the demise of America's largest corporations.

The Information Age: In contrast to globalization, the arrival at last of the Information Revolution won many more plaudits than raspberries. In the political sphere, for example, information technology is seen as undermining repressive governments.

Government: One drawback to the information age is that it exposes and demystifies all governments, exacerbating the loss of confidence in them. In some areas, governments are struggling to

make themselves relevant. Yet governments themselves contribute mightily to that loss of faith! They tend to do things that succeed in the short term but fail in the long term. For example, the social welfare systems that European nations erected after World War II to protect people are now hurting them, as they steer away jobs and wealth. Unemployment is rampant. Plutocrats know that these social systems must be dismantled - after all, not a single net new job has been created in Europe since 1970 - but they have done nothing to create a constituency for change.

Banks: The very existence of banks is in doubt. Some experts believe that new forms of commerce, like the use of cybermoney, will make them obsolete. Others predict that they will thrive in the information age because they are the only institutions trustworthy enough to make electronic commerce work.

Crime: Like everything else, crime is going global. Experts expect organized crime - drug trafficking, money laundering, financial fraud and corruption - to increase. They worry about increases in digital terrorism, with hackers wreaking havoc on information networks. And they fear the emergence of black markets in nuclear material that the Soviet republics never tracked after their empire broke up.

Health: Nearly half of United States cancer patients are now surviving at least five years - and the challenge to health care providers is to make that percentage, at the least, hold for the rest of the world. Scientists are scrambling to discover genetic secrets, but one avenue of exploration - testing for genetic susceptibility to various diseases - carries its own risk: nearly everyone will be at risk for some disorder. How genetic profiles will be used - including by insurance companies - and who will have access to them remains a huge question. True confidentiality is unlikely.

And what will happen if courts accept the idea that some criminal behavior has a genetic basis?

The Environment: Energy is still being used - and wasted - in vast amounts, degrading the environment. Some experts say the only answer is to reduce energy consumption, to make people live more

frugally. But others say information technologies can help countries and consumers cut back by eliminating the waste. For example, better traffic management could slash the gasoline wasted in traffic jams.

Learning: Education must reach more people - and it must go to them rather than forcing individuals to go to schools to learn. People may then see education as a lifelong activity, rather than something that takes place when they are young. It's also not too late to join the information age - worldwide, fewer than 5 percent of people use computers, although the proportion in the United States is upward of 30 percent.

Population: By 2000, half the world's population will be under 20, with profound consequences. The vast majority will live in poor nations, many in the streets of mega-cities that cannot provide jobs. Worriers are certain that these leaps in population will test the world's ability to feed everyone. Still, recent surveys in China show that the amount of arable land there is greater than previously thought and some scientists see biotechnology as the savior that will increase food production. No matter what happens, food may well cost everyone a lot more.

The Frenzy: Are you tired? Just wait. The pace of life in the developed world will only get faster, leading some to suggest that some people will opt out of post industrial life altogether and others to predict a big business in building sanctuaries for the harried. Alienation is a huge risk.

Considering that a huge part of Davos is the talk that goes on in the corridors, attendees had a good Davos if they covered anywhere close to the ground outlined here. If it all sounds squishy, however, remember that Davos functions best when it provides questions, not answers. After all, Elie Wiesel and at one meeting, "Questions unite people, and answers divide them."

3677 WORK-FAMILY PROGRAMMES: *We often hear that the West maintains: "When you come to work, you come to work. Your family concerns are not our concern." It is possible that at one point of industrial history this was the position taken; but no longer. The accompanying story from L.A. TIMES talks of the current trend. May be we will find a reason to retain solid aspects of our tradition.*

One Los Angeles employer that has developed extensive and well-used programs to teach its workers prenatal, lactation, child-care and parenting skills has done so in the face of a surprising fact: Most of its employees are men. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power was recently hailed in a report by the Washington Business Group on Health as one of the leaders in work-family programs, particularly those involving the health of mothers and children.

"Companies have a vested interest in improving maternal and child health at the workplace and in the community. Not only are they concerned about the health and productivity of their current work force, but also that of future workers," said Mary Jane England, a doctor who heads the nonprofit organization, which analyzes health policy and workplace issues at large employers. In addition to the DWP, the report on "Business, Babies & the Bottom Line" looked at work-family programs at six other big employers and found that each reported a significant return on investment. They are First Chicago NBD, a bank holding company; Haggar Clothing Co., Honeywell Inc., Kellogg Co., Monfort Inc., a meatpacking subsidiary of Conagra Inc., and the Dallas-Fort Worth Business Group on Health, an employer coalition.

The DWP said it saved \$2.50 for every \$1 invested in work-family programs. Employee turnover among participants in the familycare programs is 2%, compared with 7% overall at the utility. In general, the employers in the report noted that their programs not only produced healthier mothers and babies but also such side effects as reduced health-care costs decreased absenteeism and lower turnover. The employers' programs shared several characteristics, including:

- * support of top management;
- * employee involvement in the design;
- * focus on family, not just women;
- * an integrated and comprehensive approach;
- * continuous marketing;
- * various incentives to encourage participation.

At the DWP, which launched its programs in the 1980s, it boils down to good business sense. "Even when a company is faced with stiff competition because of industry deregulation, there is real value in offering work and family programs to its employees," said Faye Washington, DWP assistant general manager and chief administrative officer. "This investment in the well-being of employees and their

families is a strategy for the future that a company cannot afford not to do." The DWP was a pioneer when it started its lactation program in 1988 to help women continue to breast-feed their babies after returning from maternity leave. But all this becomes even more unusual when you consider that nearly 80% of the DWP's 9,500 employees are men. Unlike most employers, the DWP targets men with its work family programs under the philosophy that men have babies too. Indeed, the utility even offers a class called "Breast-Feeding for Men." That's not as strange as it sounds. Each participant learns about the breast-feeding process and is taught to be a coach to the nursing mother, who, especially in the early days, could use more than one pair of hands.

The DWP owns 100 Medela breast pumps, which are available to employees and their wives, partners and dependents. A lactation counselor can answer questions on breast-feeding or child care, even on nights and weekends. The return on investment in the lactation program alone is 3 to 1 in dollar terms, said Rona Cohen, a maternal-child health consultant to the DWP. Participants felt they were able to return to work earlier and nurse their babies longer, which keeps babies healthier. Absenteeism was reduced by 27% and healthcare claims were reduced by 35%, Cohen said.

The DWP offers a variety of classes and other resources to encourage its employee dads to be more involved with their families.

DWP family programs include beepers for expectant fathers, parenting classes, wellness programs, on-site child care, subsidized child care and parent support groups. "We take them all the way from when they're pregnant to when the child goes to college" Cohen said.

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