In Search of a New Work Ethic

by George Starcher

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INTRODUCTION

We all devote most of our time and much of our energy to work. Psychologist Viktor Frankl believes that some mental illnesses are caused by a lack of meaning in our lives. If so, work without meaning takes a heavy toll in productivity, morale, and mental and spiritual health. If, on the other hand, we recognize that we are both material and spiritual beings, and that the development of our spiritual qualities, or human virtues, is of overriding importance, then work must be redefined to meet this need for a deeper meaning in our lives. We can no longer simply regard work as a means of survival or to earn money to fuel an ever-expanding acquisitive economy. To be meaningful, work must be seen as an opportunity for personal growth and as a form of service to others.

 It seems increasingly clear that we need to develop new insights into the meaning of work. The fundamental changes in society, in the economy, and in the workplace are drastically changing the nature of work. Just as the

transition from an agrarian society to an industrial one brought about a fundamental change in work, so the present transition to an information and knowledge based economy is again revolutionizing work. This paper highlights the need to rethink the meaning of work and to develop a new work ethic adapted to a global, modern post-industrial society. In the following paragraphs we will discuss the trends affecting the nature of work, describe three work-related diseases, explore some relevant Baha'i writings, discuss some characteristics of the new work ethic, offer some examples of good practice, and discuss how they relate to spirituality in the workplace.

These views reflect experience primarily in the Western world and may not reflect the reality in developing countries and in subsistence economies. A more general statement on work in developing economies can be found in the June 1999 Report of the Director General of the International Labour Organization on Decent Work. (See Annex One)

TRENDS AFFECTING THE NATURE OF WORK

Profound societal change accompanied the transition throughout the developed world from an agricultural to an industrial economy. In many countries, the people engaged in agriculture declined from 70 or 80 percent of the working population to between three and five percent. Large numbers of unemployed persons moved to cities searching for work in industrial plants and offices. This influx of workers created great stress on urban areas unable to provide adequate housing, infrastructure, and facilities. Today, we are witnessing another transition or revolution: the decline of industry and the growth of services and the knowledge-based economy. The impact is no less severe than the transition from an agricultural to an industrial society. In many ways it is even more severe because of the speed with which the changes are taking place. We need only to read the statistics on unemployment, poverty and homelessness, drug and substance abuse, crime, suicide, and urban crises to realize the present plight of humanity. In this period of transition to a post-industrial economy we witness glimpses of the emergence of a new global economic order and, hopefully, an "age of consciousness and global stewardship."

There are several trends which underlie these challenges and which are shaping a new paradigm or model of business which is emerging in developed countries of the West. These forces are also profoundly changing the nature of work.

GLOBALIZATION

The pervasive effects of the globalization of markets, competition, financial markets and of corporations need little explanation. The inexorable breaking down of trade barriers, in spite of resistance from many quarters, is a significant factor in economic growth throughout the world. Moreover, foreign investment in the world has grown steadily. However, the delocalization of manufacturing and the outsourcing of millions of jobs to countries like China and India are also creating a global labour market in a world of extreme inequalities and major disruptions in many regions.

RAPID TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

Another key trend changing the nature of work is technology. A major factor in the displacement of work and jobs, technology is also changing profoundly the nature of work and the skills required. Robots are replacing workers just as middle management is being replaced by technology. Jobs that have not been outsourced must now be filled by professional people who can think, reason, and decide.

INTENSITY OF COMPETITION

One obvious consequence of globalization is the increasing intensity of competition in many sectors of the economy. The factors for success and even survival are changing as quality, service, and time demands force major changes in organization and management.

INCREASING TURBULENCE AND INSTABILITY

Managers are experiencing an increase in the pace, complexity and unpredictability of work life. Peter Veill has aptly characterised this period as "managing in permanent white-water," in which decisions must be made under chaotic and turbulent conditions. They must get used to surprises and novel problems, cope with uncertainty, and expect rapid changes. As a result, job security is decreasing and lifetime careers are the exception.

CUSTOMER FOCUS

To survive this intense competition, one requirement is to focus more sharply on customers. This focus must involve the whole organisation, and structures and processes must be adapted to encourage this.

CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN CAPITAL

Companies operating in competitive markets are finding it difficult to attract, motivate and retain a more highly skilled workforce. Human capital has become a scarcer resource than financial capital. In order to win what McKinsey & Company has called 'the war for talent', leading companies have adapted human resource policies and practices and workplace conditions to meet increasing demands for meaningful work, a sense of community in the work place, integrity and employability.

EXPANDING PARTICIPATION OF EMPLOYEES

Through profit sharing, pension, and share-ownership plans, employees have an increasing stake in their enterprises. They must be considered as important partners in business. Eighty percent of the "100 Best Companies to Work For" have some form of broad based employee share ownership plans.

Each of these trends deserves more detailed analysis. Nonetheless, it is clear that the birth of a new post-industrial economy is very painful and creates a severe strain in the lives of nearly all the affected employees and managers as well as their families. Major disruptions occur when traditional factories close and new jobs are created thousands of kilometers away or in different countries. These new jobs also are often very different, requiring new skills and capabilities. This new and intensely competitive economy also leads to greater work insecurity. The promise of lifetime employment no longer exists.

These fundamental changes in the workplace are brought together brilliantly by the authors of a recent article in the McKinsey Quarterly. This article highlights the crucial importance and challenge of managing "tacit and complex interactions" more effectively in a service and knowledge-based economy. Traditionally, transactional and routine interactions were dominant. Today the skills required in four out of five non-agricultural jobs—such as managers, salespeople, software engineers, fund managers, doctors and nurses, and insurance agents—involve searching, coordinating and monitoring.

Managing the people in these jobs to gain competitive advantage is the new paradigm of management. It involves fundamental changes in structures, cultures, systems, shared values, and the way people are recruited, developed, and rewarded. "Management's job is to foster connectivity, remove barriers, facilitate learning, and provide new tools to help workers collaborate and learn in an environment that demands more and more complex and often decentralized decision making."[1]

1   Scott C. Beardsley, Bradford C. Johnson, and James M. Manyika, *Competitive advantage from better interaction*s, The McKinsey Quarterly, 2006 Number 2.

WORK RELATED DISEASES

The above trends have created three work-related "diseases": unemployment, meaningless work, and workaholism. More than 750 million people – between 35 and 40 percent of the global workforce – are estimated to be without work. Unemployment and partial employment are generally considered to be Europe's biggest social problem. Recent studies confirm its dramatic psychosocial impact. The suicide rate, for example, is 20 times greater among people unemployed for more than one year. Frequently, self-image erodes along with one's own identity, since society tends to ask "What do we do?" and "How much do we earn?", not "Who are we?" Unemployment also is a huge drain on the budgets of most governments.

Another work-related disease is meaningless work. The industrial economy was characterized by work that required performing well-defined tasks as efficiently as possible. Employees for the most part were not asked or expected to think nor had they been educated and trained to do so. Production lines and office work as well were designed using scientific management for unskilled workers, in many cases, for those leaving the farms in search of employment in the cities. But what these workers found was often boring, mindless and soulless work, leaving little or no opportunity for self-expression or self-fulfilment. Workers, it was often said, were expected to leave their brains at the door when entering the factory.

A third work-related disease is workaholism, the tendency to let work consume our lives. This disease is perhaps a characteristic of the period we are living in, of the tremendous stress and demands placed on employees and, more importantly, on managers and entrepreneurs facing intense competition in a turbulent, global economy. At the same time, the younger generation is seeking a better work-life balance and more reasonable limits to growth and the continuous drive for greater productivity.

Solutions must be found to overcome these work-related diseases which are among contemporary society's major problems.

BAHA'I WRITINGS RELATED TO WORK

Concerned about these trends, and convinced that most of the measures outlined above do not address the fundamental issues involved, EBBF has undertaken a project aimed at discovering insights into the meaning of work. In studying the Baha'i writings, from which the quotes below are taken, we find a number of basic concepts relevant to these concerns. These include:

1. WORK IS AN OBLIGATION AND A DUTY, NOT AN OPTION

"Man must bring forth fruit. One who yieldeth no fruit is like unto a fruitless tree, and a fruitless tree is fit but for the fire." And again, "It is incumbent upon each one of you to engage in some occupation – such as a craft, a trade or the like." And "We must never live on others like a parasitic plant." [1]

2. WORK IS A SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

"Effort is an inseparable part of man's life…. Life is after all a struggle. Progress is attained through struggle, and without such a struggle life ceases to have a meaning; it becomes even extinct." In other words, work has not only a utilitarian purpose, but also a value in contributing to our personal growth and in developing our spiritual, or human, qualities.

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[1] See also Quotations on Work from eleven living religions of the world in Annex One.

"The progress of machinery has not made effort unnecessary. It has given it a new form, a new outlet."

3. WORK IS ELEVATED TO THE STATUS OF WORSHIP IF IT IS DONE IN A SPIRIT OF SERVICE TO HUMANITY

"Work done in the spirit of service is the highest form of worship." Our attitude toward work is thus very important in bringing meaning and significance to it. Even routine tasks, if done in a spirit of service to others, become noble. Thus, work must be organized so that workers can associate their individual contributions with a meaningful result. It is encouraging that industry is moving away from the traditional assembly-line method toward new work systems that bring more meaning to the tasks performed and put more responsibility at the operator's level.

4. WORK DOES NOT HAVE TO BE PAID TO BE MEANINGFUL

"Homemaking is a highly honourable and responsible work of fundamental importance for mankind." Indeed, according to the International Labour Office, the combined total of those working in the informal economy and non-wage earners in agriculture now represent the majority of the global workforce. What is important is to be "engaged in an occupation which will be of benefit to mankind."

5. WE SHOULD SEEK PERFECTION AND EXCELLENCE IN ALL THAT WE DO

"The man who makes a piece of note paper to the best of his ability, conscientiously, concentrating all his forces on perfecting it, is giving praise to God. Briefly, all effort and exertion put forth by man from the fullness of his heart is worship if it is prompted by the highest motives and the will to do service to humanity."

6. CONSULTATION IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE APPROACH IN DECISION-MAKING

The consultative process as defined in Baha'i writings and practiced by all Baha'i institutions encourages individual participants to transcend their differences in order to function as a body with its own interests and goals. "In all things, it is necessary to consult. The maturity of the gift of understanding is made manifest through consultation." This approach obliges all members to express themselves freely, to detach themselves from their own ideas, and to carefully consider the ideas of others. The real test of this approach is the extent to which participants are united and fully supportive of the decisions that emerge, even if they may have begun with differing opinions. "Unity in diversity" and the "search for truth" are the hallmarks of consultation. Respect for others' opinions and acknowledging the richness of diversity yields broadly supported decisions with lasting impact.

7. PARTICIPATION IN PROFITS AND OWNERSHIP IS ENCOURAGED

Associating all employees in the fruits of their labour, through participation in profits and ownership adds meaning to work. This not only reinforces motivation; it encourages creativity and innovation at all levels. This commitment is particularly important in managing during turbulent market conditions in which competition is intense and shorter delivery times and product life cycles must be met.

8. COLLABORATION IS SUPERIOR TO COMPETITION

The focus on competition and individual performance reduces the real potential of the workforce. Through collaboration and teamwork, and by practicing unity in diversity, leading-edge companies acquire a powerful advantage while making work more meaningful.

9. VOLUNTARY SHARING IS MORE VALUABLE THAN SHARING IMPOSED BY LAW AND REGULATION

Sharing of work is one solution to unemployment and workaholism. Also, voluntary sharing of wealth will be needed to reduce social injustices and narrow the ever-increasing extremes of wealth and poverty. This tends to support those who favour voluntary approaches to corporate responsibility rather than increased regulation.

Among the business-relevant virtues highlighted in the Baha'i writings, special emphasis is given to trustworthiness: "Commerce is as a heaven, whose sun is trustworthiness, piety, and truthfulness. The most precious of all things … is… trustworthiness." (Bahá'u'lláh). The Great Place to Work Institute, has been surveying company workplace practices for over twenty years. One of their conclusions is that trust between managers and employees is the primary defining characteristic of the very best workplaces. (See Annex Two) Trust is also fundamental to building and maintaining meaningful relationships with other stakeholders.

TOWARDS A NEW WORK ETHIC

According to Webster's Dictionary, a work ethic is "a system of ethics in which central importance is ascribed to work, or purposeful activity, and to qualities of character believed to be promoted by work." The following paragraphs, based on the writings and principles already discussed, outline ways to define a new work ethic.

1. The starting point for redefining work is an understanding of human nature and the purpose of life. At the heart of much misunderstanding is the traditional view that work is simply a means of production and delivery of goods and services. Labour has too often been viewed as only one of the many elements of the final cost. But because humans have both a material and a spiritual nature, many thoughtful people are coming to believe that mankind is not made for work, but that work is made for man. Survival is no longer the essential purpose of work. In post-industrial economies, work must foster personal growth and the spiritual development of employees and managers alike. Enterprises must provide them with a setting in which they continually develop their knowledge, skills and experience and thereby realize their potential. To be meaningful, work must be focused on service to others, both outside and within the firm.

2. To provide such an enabling environment, spirituality [1] must permeate the workplace of the future. A "spiritual workplace" is happy and collaborative; it provides meaningful work and opportunities for personal growth for all of its employees. It is also an organization and a workplace characterized by such qualities as trustworthiness, honesty, justice, respect and caring. Worker satisfaction derives from striving for excellence, from work well done, and from doing something worthwhile. In the end, our attitude toward the value of our work and its purpose determines its meaning. Take the story of the two stonecutters who were interviewed about their work. One complained bitterly about the boring, repetitive work he had been doing for 39 years. The other, with a smile on his face, expressed satisfaction from the same kind of work. When asked why, he replied that he was proud to participate in building a beautiful cathedral. So, work does not have to be exciting. With proper vision and purpose, even routine work can be satisfying.

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[1] Definitions of spirituality differ greatly. One study based upon in-depth interviews with over 100 executives ("A Study of Spirituality in the Workplace" by Ian Mitroff and Elizabeth Denton in the Sloan Management Review, Summer 1999) concluded, "If a single word best captures the meaning of spirituality and the vital role that it plays in people's lives, that word would be "interconnectedness." For readers seeking deeper understanding of the term, Chapter 3 of "The Spirit at Work Phenomenon" By Sue Howard and Daniel Welbourn addresses the question "What is Spirituality."

3. The opportunity exists to create millions of new jobs in the civil sector. Meaningful work exists. Much more can be created, for example, to improve neighborhoods and communities, to expand services for the elderly, to improve education, and expand health care. Already the steady increase in the activities of non-governmental organizations (NGO's) testifies to the satisfaction earned through contributing to build the social capital of our communities. The United Kingdom today counts 350,000 voluntary associations.

4. Society has an obligation to provide work for all its citizens. It is likely that the work week will significantly decrease to share available paid work and allow more leisure for personal development and community service.

5. Attitudes toward unpaid work must change. Throughout history one of the fundamental activities of humans has been caring for others. Yet such purposeful activity today as managing a household, raising a family, and volunteering are not accorded the same value as paid work. Many do not even consider it as work. Changing this attitude is basic to easing unemployment.

6. Management practices and attitudes must make work more meaningful. Ways must be found to associate employees with the results of their labour through improved communications and contact with customers. Ample evidence exists that such organisational approaches as cross-functional teams, autonomous work groups, empowerment, and

quality circles permit employees to feel closer to their customers and consider their work as a service as well as a source of income. Ways must be found, too, to instill trust, stressing cooperation (rather than competition), empowerment, honesty and openness.

7. Human resource policies and practices that enhance employee satisfaction and development also lead to greater motivation and higher productivity (and profitability). Studies increasingly provide evidence that such economic parameters as return on investment, return on sales, and growth in sales and profits are much higher in companies with good human resource policies and practices that create a feeling of belonging, provide equitable compensation, eliminate conflict, foster a sense of accomplishment, encourage participation in decisions, share information and embrace change. A more holistic approach to work is needed, and policies and practices should reflect the needs of the family as well as those of the company.

8. To provide meaningful work for the greatest number, appropriate technology strategies must balance efficiency with social considerations. The transfer of modern technology to developing nations must consider such social results as increased unemployment. A Swedish friend recently visited two tea plantations. One, in Malaysia, provided work for one hundred families who picked the leaves by hand in a traditional way. At the other plantation, in Australia, a machine picked leaves more rapidly. How long

before such a machine replaces the hundreds of families using traditional hand-picking in Malaysia?

9. Small is still beautiful. Well known for his book written more than thirty years ago,[1] E.F. Schumacher made a convincing case for keeping things small – companies, organizations, factories, etc. We are now beginning to see a growing number of companies that break themselves into small, fairly autonomous units. Companies are finding that small units tend to be more innovative and stay closer to customers. Such units also show more "will to succeed" and make better decisions than in large, centralized organizations. Also, working in a small unit, whether independently or part of a large group, and having authority to make decisions tends to be more meaningful for managers and employees alike.

1   Schumacher, E.F. *Small is Beautiful*, London, Blond & Griggs Ltd, 1973.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

"Work plays an important role in humankind's search for meaning… Work can give meaning not only in the personal sense, but also in the broader societal sense of transcending one's own personal needs to improve the quality of life, help people in need or contribute value to society."[1]

Companies and organizations of all sizes can do a lot to create a meaningful workplace, one that focuses on service to others and to society, one that enhances the quality of life and helps to develop the potential of the entire workforce. The first need is to define an inspiring purpose that motivates all elements of an organization. The Baha'i perspective insists that the fundamentals of the economic condition are divine and associated with the heart and spirit. As such, "enduring solutions to economic problems will be found only in the application of spiritual principles."[2] And further, "The guiding principle for business … is that business needs to serve the real needs of humankind (EBBF Statement on Prosperity, 1996).

Examples of creating meaningful work abound and range from the human resource policies of the world's largest corporations to common expressions of caring

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1   Kets de Vries, Manfred. *The Leadership Mystique*. Pearson Education.

2   *Emerging Values for a Global Economy*, EBBF, 2004. See also *Purpose before Profit: Towards a Spiritual Foundation for Corporate Responsibility* by Marjo Lips-Wiersma, EBBF, 2006.

by fellow workers in small companies. Such companies and organizations:

- Clarify the purpose and mission of the company or relevant organization unit. For managers and employees alike, the basic meaning conferring element which grounds meaningful work is the purpose for which it is done. Jobs without purpose constitute meaningless work.
- Articulate and disseminate the core values of the organization and ensure that they are aligned with the purpose, vision and mission.
- Provide inspirational leadership at all levels.
- Formulate, publish, disseminate, and provide continuous training in codes of conduct and ethics. In larger organizations, these codes are further embedded in the organizations through pinpointing responsibility at the board level, appointment of ethics officers, designated contacts for whistle-blowers, sustainability reports, and stories about their relevance.
- Offer good pay and benefits, including profit-sharing.
- Design reward systems, both formal and informal, that reinforce good practices.
- Use consultation and dialogue in decision-making.[3]
- Be open and honest with employees. Give authentic, rapid feedback in a spirit of support and with zealous commitment to excellence.

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3   *United Consultation: A Fresh Look at Participative Management* by Don Plunkett. EBBF, 2005.

- Offer training and development, both on the job and off, that permits employees to feel fully qualified and acquire skills to enhance their employability.
- Show appreciation and recognition for work well done.
- Encourage teamwork and collaboration that permit a better understanding of how work relates to "satisfying real needs of customers."
- Practice diversity, gender equality, hiring minorities and the handicapped.
- Empower employees to shape their work environments, feel responsible, and influence decisions.
- Trust employees to do what they do well.
- Demonstrate real caring for employees – for example, by showing understanding of temporary personal crises such as serious illness in the family.
- Encourage more direct contact of office employees with customers to improve their understanding of their needs and how to serve them best.
- Help employees find a reasonable balance between their work and their private lives.
- Introduce flexible working policies and practices that incorporate high levels of trust. These include flexible work hours, working at home, four-day weeks, job sharing, and the like.
- Engage in community involvement programmes as a company and as individuals. Provide opportunities for employees to give something back to their communities through voluntary service and by matching charitable contributions.

SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

This brief paper on a new work ethic would be incomplete without a few words on spirituality in the workplace. Creating a meaningful workplace means creating a "spiritual workplace," one characterized by such qualities as trustworthiness, honesty, thoughtfulness, respect and caring. In fact, many books and articles have been published on workplace spirituality. One of the first to draw together in one volume all of the central aspects of workplace spirituality is The Spirit at Work Phenomenon by Sue Howard and David Welbourn. We recommend it highly to those seeking a comprehensive overview of this subject. Another rich source of information can be found on the web site for the Association for Spirit at Work at www.spiritatwork.org. Read also in Annex Four how one CEO applied spiritual values in the design of work systems.

Nevertheless, many people shy away from using the term "spirituality" when discussing work or management. One reason is that they feel religion can be a source of conflict in an increasingly diverse workforce. Others find that much in modern working life tends to crush rather than enhance and nourish our spirit. But spirituality is really about well-being and what makes us feel good about ourselves and motivates us to do our best. It is about finding purpose and meaning in our work and seeing our work as a form of service to others. "Spirituality is not religion; it is not about beliefs, creeds or dogmas," wrote Georgeanne Lamont and Sally Burns. "It is about

being fully alive, relationships, and that which gives meaning and purpose to life." [1] Martin Rutte, Chairman of the Centre for Spirituality and the Workplace at the Sobey School of Business at St. Mary's University in Halifax, describes spirituality as "an ongoing quest for meaning and purpose." Others say it is about understanding our values, building relationships, oneness, service, and having respect and compassion for other people. Spirituality then embraces trust, values, ethics, wellness, and meaning, all of which are closely related to the new work ethic and to organisational effectiveness in today's complex and competitive global economy. In the memorable words of George Bernard Shaw: "This is the true joy in life - being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one."

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1   Lamont, Georgeanne, *The Spirited Business: Success Stories of Soul-Friendly Companies.* Hodder & Stoughton, London. 2002.

CONCLUSION

Today's service and knowledge-based global economy is undergoing change even more profound and dramatic than the industrial revolution. These changes are directly affecting work – its nature, its quality and its meaning. As a result, new rules or standards of conduct are emerging that impact the organisation of work, human-resource policies and practices, work conditions, remuneration practices, organizational climate, and the purpose and finality of work. Since work is the dominant institution and influence in our lives, enlarging its spiritual dimension to embrace a new work ethic will inevitably increase well-being and enhance the prosperity of enterprises throughout the world.

ANNEX ONE

A Statement of Policy on Decent Work by the International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The overarching objective of the ILO has been re-phrased as the promotion of opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Decent work is the converging focus of the four strategic objectives, namely rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue. Decent work is an organizing concept for the ILO in order to provide an overall framework for action in economic and social development.

"*Decent work needs to be the centrepiece of integrated national and international efforts to reduce and eliminate poverty.*" Juan Somavia, ILO Director-General

Meeting the needs of people calls for an integrated approach to social and economic policies, be it at the local, national, regional or global level. The Decent Work Agenda brings together the goals of rights at work, employment and income, social protection, and social dialogue, in a coherent, develop-oriented and gender-equitable vision for development. To support this vision, the ILO has created the Policy Integration Department.

The right to decent work encompasses productive and sufficient work of acceptable quality in which rights are protected and which generates an adequate income with adequate social protection. Sufficient work means that all have full access to income-generating opportunities.

Thus, the right to decent work has three rights dimensions: the right to work, rights in work and the right to adequate social protection.

The right to decent work is not confined to wage employment, but extends to self-employment, home working and other income-generating activities. It demands the creation of a social, economic and physical environment in which all people have fair and equal opportunities to prosper by virtue of their own endeavour and in a manner consistent with their dignity. Thus, the right to decent work carries with it the responsibility to promote the personal capabilities and expand the opportunities for people to find productive work and to earn a decent livelihood. Accordingly, the right to decent work implies the availability of both employment opportunities and the preconditions for income generation such as the availability of assets, credit and a favourable regulatory environment. Rights in work include the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work, including fair wages, equal remuneration for work of equal value, equal opportunities, safe and healthy conditions of work, and reasonable hours of work and rest, as well as the rights to organize and bargain collectively. Various forms of "exploitative" work, such as bonded labour and other forms of slavery-like practices are prohibited. All employment opportunities and income-generating activities must be of acceptable quality i.e. culturally appropriate and consistent with the dignity of the individual.

The right to decent work also requires that well-designed and adequate social safety mechanisms are put in place for those occasions, such as economic and political crises, when regular employment becomes unavailable to some individuals.

ANNEX TWO

Quotations on Work from Ten Spiritual Traditions of the World

God will judge each man according to his works. All men shall be known by their works. Whatever one undertakes to do, one should do it with all his might. God commands men to work and promises that He will be with them in all good works. Judaism

Not ease, but work is the mark of a good man. The superior individual does not indulge in luxurious ease, but works constantly for the good. He is superior in that he does things which the base cannot understand or appreciate. Confucianism

One becomes what he does. The man who does good becomes good and the man who does evil becomes evil. The motive of one's works should not be the consequences. One should do good despite the results. No one who does good will come to an evil end. Hinduism

A day once gone will never return. Therefore, one should be diligent each moment to do good. We reach the goal of the good life by pious works. Jainism

Works, and not birth, determine one's place in the world. At all times one should work diligently and with earnestness. Hard work is praised. Buddhism

God works and so man should work. The Christian will be diligent in good works all the time, for a man is to be judged by his works. As man works for the good, it is God who works in and through him. Christianity

We come to the divine through our good works. Thus, at all times man should strive to work well so that he may gain recognition in the eyes of the Wise Lord. Zoroastrianism

Everyone should strive to excel in good works. Work constantly. God will observe your works and judge you according to whether they are good or evil. Islam

God has determined from the beginning the works man must do. No man can escape this determination. Men become saints or sinners by their works only, not by their professions. Good works bring one to a clear knowledge of the divine. Sikhism

Ye are the trees of My garden; ye must give forth goodly and wondrous fruits, that ye yourselves and others may profit therefrom. Thus it is incumbent on every one to engage in crafts and professions, for therein lies the secret of wealth, O men of understanding! For results depend upon means, and the grace of God shall be all-sufficient unto you. Trees that yield not fruit have been and will ever be for the fire. Bahá'í

ANNEX THREE

What Makes a Great Place to Work[*]?

The Great Place to Work Institute has been surveying company workplace practices for over twenty years. One of their conclusions is that trust between managers and employees is the primary defining characteristic of the very best workplaces. At the heart of their definition of a great place to work - a place where employees " trust the people they work for, have pride in what they do, and enjoy the people they work with " - is the idea that a great workplace is measured by the quality of the three, interconnected relationships between employees and management, between employees and their jobs/company, and between employees and other employees.

 Their research also shows that companies considered to be great workplaces benefit in a number of ways that build competitive advantage and financial results. They:

- Receive more qualified job applications for open positions.
- Experience a lower level of turnover.
- Experience reductions in health care costs.
- Enjoy higher levels of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.
- Foster greater innovation, creativity and risk taking.
- Benefit from higher productivity and profitability

In another survey, interviews and focus groups were held with hundreds of people. They uncovered 22 keys to a meaningful workplace. All told, there are some 60 examples to illustrate the keys and 100 action ideas. Tying it all together are these major themes:

1. There's a sharp distinction between "meaningful work" and "job satisfaction." For most people, "satisfaction" looks and feels like conformance to standards. Needs and expectations are met—period. In a meaningful workplace, it's less about needs and expectations—and more about hopes and dreams and fulfillment.

2. People define "meaningful workplace" in vastly different ways. The advocates of "five easy steps" must be gnashing their teeth as they scan the long list of 22 keys. This is one case where quick fixes just won't work. To create a meaningful workplace, people must be ready to effect change in many areas.

3. Several keys rise above all others in importance. Topping the list is Purpose—the sense that what I'm doing as an individual, and what the organization is doing collectively, truly makes a difference. Also in the top tier, in order of importance: Ownership, Fit, Oneness, and Relationship-Building. In the second tier: Service, Equality, Validation, Invention, and Personal Development. For organizations that want to enrich the work environment, these keys offer a logical starting place.

4. People do NOT cite incentives or high pay as key ingredients of the meaningful workplace. Incentives came up only once—from a former salesperson who told horror stories of internal competition. As for compensation, people sharply distinguish between "fair pay" (critically important) and "high pay."

5. Business concepts and strategies—such as reengineering, strategic planning, TQM and its more recent incarnations, etc.—rarely come up when people talk about fulfillment at work. For instance, in all the research conversations, no one said or even suggested that "a recent reengineering initiative helped me find greater meaning in my work." Rather, people focused on fundamentals—like purpose, service, dialogue, respect.

6. There's an almost desperate eagerness to talk about ways to renew and reinvent the workplace. People from all walks of work life participated in the Meaning At Work Project, and with few exceptions, they showed remarkable zeal in sharing their stories. It seemed as if they had been holding back for years—and in fact, many had been doing just that. A common comment: "I wish we could have this conversation back where I work."

ANNEX FOUR

EBBF CEO Applies Spiritual Values in Work Design

Bill Walker retired recently from DuPont. He is a member of EBBF and its past Chairman. In 1990, Bill was assigned to oversee the construction, operation, and design of work systems in a $1 billion greenfield (that is, a brand new site) multiproduct site and series of plants in northern Spain. The initial plant at this site was to have 350 employees (the work systems were later implemented in other plants on the site as they were built). The first step Bill took was to gather key people (fewer than ten) to discuss and develop a "direction document" defining the vision, the core values, some behaviour guidelines, and the operational principles which would serve as a basis for designing the work systems. Such principles as empowerment, multifunctionality of people and teams, diversity in hiring, single responsibility for operating, maintaining, improving and renewing facilities, self management of teams, use of consultation in decision making, no job titles, identical offices for all professionals including the General Manager, no executive perks, respect for the environment, listening to the concerns of the local communities, were the basis for designing the systems. Also all DuPont personnel at the plant were to be salaried and considered as "professionals", that is their knowledge was their major contribution, not their hands. As salaried professionals there was no extra pay for overtime. Many non core jobs were outsourced. Continuous learning was stressed for all personnel

and a considerable investment was made in training and education.

 The staffing and functioning of the teams was obviously an important element in the total work system. These teams were empowered to schedule their own work, staffing of shifts and vacations, with a voice in hiring, and in general they managed their processes just as long as the business objectives were met. Teams carried out individual performance evaluations, determined who was ready for promotion, and carried out most disciplinary activities. They functioned in a very consultative fashion meeting daily in work teams to plan work and to consider and resolve problems impacting safety, quality, production or people.

 The results showed how successful this approach was. First, the plant was competed ahead of schedule and below budget. Since its opening, the plant has been one of the most productive plants in Europe for DuPont. In a country (Spain) where unions prevailed, the plant remained non-union and had no works council. There were individual work contracts, and progression was based on skills and capabilities, not on tenure or job in an hierarchy. The quality of the product was world class and typically exported to other countries in Europe, Asia and to the Americas. Absenteeism was almost non-existent. In designing the site, Bill devoted roughly half of the site to the restoration and improvement of a wildlife habitat. This important service to the community has been written up as a "corporate best practice" example and has been reported on in the press.

To summarize some of the principles and values underlying this approach to organizing work systems:

1. Consultation and participation, or as some have said non-adversarial decision making, in empowered and self-managed teams is fundamental to gaining the commitment of the whole organization and to meet the legitimate aspirations of personnel.

2. Unity in diversity and purpose underlies hiring and human resource practices. Bill inculcated his own strong feeling into the system that "it is more important to be in unity than to be right." "I don't believe I am always right," says Bill of himself. Arguing about who is right is discouraged. Everyone is encouraged to participate and to offer ideas to the team, but not to feel ownership of these ideas which could lead to win-lose situations if one idea is chosen in favour to another. As for diversity, Bill adds that a mixture of women and men with a broad diversity of age, skills, and geographic dispersion is necessary in order to strengthen decision making capability with a diversity of perspectives.

3. Share ownership in DuPont is encouraged by employees at all levels through a stock option plan. In the U.K. and in some other countries, a matching plan of DuPont gives one share free for each share purchased up to a maximum of 6% of salary as well as stock options.

4. Ethical practices are one of the core values of DuPont. An annual ethical survey of all employees is felt to be fundamental to creating the trust needed

to make the more innovative work systems function effectively.

5. Sustainable development and environmental preservation have been important considerations for Bill as well as for DuPont. Adherence to corporate goals on emissions and respect of all chemical industry regulations is of prime importance. "The Goal is Zero" is the company philosophy on injuries and emissions. Each plant submits an annual environmental report to all interested people in the community. Also a Community Advisory Committee was created in many communities and included some of the most outspoken critics and supporters of DuPont. These committees typically meet quarterly to discuss mutual issues between DuPont and the community.

6. Work-life programmes and policies were created in recognition of the importance of the compatibility of work and family. Policies to help employees find care centers and kindergardens, and parental leave policies, are among these programmes.

7. Management's role was revolutionized. With decentralized work systems and empowered teams, Bill no long looked to his managers for their ideas for improvement. He encouraged them to listen to the people, elicit good ideas from them and support them. The manager's role he said, is more to listen and encourage, to empower and support, to facilitate, and to give information on the business. Bill's own style in presiding meetings, in which he spent much of his time, was more that of a facilitator than a decider, but he expected meetings to produce

solutions and commitment rather than simply ideas and discussion.

8. An effort was made to create a feeling among all personnel that their work was a form of service to others and that it contributed to the "greater good." This was done by communicating how the products they produced contributed to such beneficial uses as Novex* in firemen's uniforms (to save lives), Kevlar* in bullet proof vests and gloves which cannot be cut, and Lycra* to provide comfort in clothing. Also an attempt was made to reinforce the feeling that work can also be a valid path for personal spiritual development and self realization.

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