



An inquiry into the nature, activities and results of leading from a spiritual basis

Organisation

During our 1½ – 2 hour interviews with leaders who participated in our international research programme, we asked each one to share specific stories that exemplified how they drew from their spiritual view of life to respond to a challenging situation.

In this file you will find 29 stories related to the broad topic of “Organisation”. These stories are organised according to the following four categories:

- 1. Conflict resolution (5 stories)**
- 2. Changing the organisational culture (10 stories)**
- 3. Creating and sustaining the organisational culture (11 stories)**
- 4. Quality assurance programmes (3 stories)**

This file contains only the stories excerpted from the full interviews. To review the career history, current responsibilities, spiritual views, and other aspects of leading from a spiritual basis, please refer to the complete transcript of each leader, which can be found in the knowledge-base.

This file also contains each leader’s “spiritual theme” that summarises his or her spiritual view of life.

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**INTERVIEW STORIES ARE SORTED BY LAST NAME WITHIN EACH CATEGORY.
THE FOLLOWING LEADERS ARE CONTAINED IN THIS FILE:**

Name	Country	Organisation Name	Sector or Industry	Position	Age	Years in Leadership
Aguenza, Floridas, F.	The Philippines	Planters Development Bank	Banking	President and COO	62	30
Behner, John R.	El Salvador	Nabisco	Food	Former Country Manager	66	40
Canada, Francisco Roberto	Argentina	Errepar S. A.	Publishing	Director, Partner	47	20
Chand, Amber	USA	The Amber Chand Collection	Retail Marketing	Founder	53	9
		Eziba	Retail Marketing	VP of Vision, Co-founder		
Chattopadhyay, A. K.	India	ACC Limited Refractories Division	Manufacture and Installation, Refractory	VP - Senior	50	20
Covey, Stephen R.	USA	FranklinCovey	Professional Services	Vice Chairman	73	45
Cuneo, Federico	Peru	Bank of Boston	Banking	Former Director, Corporate	50	20
		American Glass Products	Glass Manufacturing and Distribution	Chairman		
Daugherty, Thomas	USA	Methodist Health Care System	Health Care/ Medical Care	VP of Spiritual Care and Values Integration	61	27
Franklin, Carol	Switzerland	World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)	Environmental Protection & Conservation	Former CEO	53	20
		Swiss Re	Insurance	Former Head of Human Resources		
Jiang, Niran	Australia	Institute of Human Excellence	Business Training & Consulting	CEO	40	15
	USA	S. C. Johnson	Household Products	Former Manager, Marketing		
	USA	Coca-Cola	Food	Former Mgr, Sr Trends		
Maitra, Ashoke	India	Times of India Group	Publishing, Newspaper	Director HR	45	16
Moitra, Deependra	India	Lucent Technologies	Tele-communications	General Mgr, Engineering	32	7
Narayana, G.	India	Excel Industries, Ltd.	Chemicals, Biochem, Agri	Chairman - Executive	60	38
Ollé, Ramón	The Netherlands	Epson Europe B.V.	Electronic Equipment and Services	President	52	27
Raghavan, N. S.	India	Infosys Technologies, Ltd.	Information Technology	Founder Director & Joint Mgr Dir.	61	35
Raman, Ananth	USA	Graptex, Inc.	Manufacturing – Electrical & Aluminium	Chairman & CEO, President	55	25
Sinclair, James	USA/ Tanzania	Tan Range Exploration, Ltd.	Mining	Chairman	62	41

<u>Name</u>	Country	Organisation Name	Sector or Industry	Position	Age	Years in Leadership
Vrethammar, Magnus	UK	Pergo	Laminated Flooring	Former President for Europe	52	22
	Sweden	Finess	Consumer Disposable	Former President, Consumer Division		
Webb, Janiece	USA	Motorola Corporation	Electronic Communications	Senior Vice President	47	28

THE FOLLOWING STORIES ARE CONTAINED IN THIS FILE:

Organisation – Conflict Resolution

- Treating competitors and distributors with trust and respect – John Behner
- Institutionalising win-win agreements – Stephen R. Covey
- Designing win-win solutions – Stephen R. Covey
- Solving business conflicts – Federico Cuneo
- Practicing non-violence in the workplace – Ashoke Maitra

Organisational Culture – Changing

- Turning around a failing organisation – Dr. A. K. Chattopadhyay
- Spiritual intention in leadership – Stephen Covey
- Starting from the top – Thomas Daugherty
- Changing people's behaviour – Carol Franklin
- Shifting the thinking of the company – Niranjana Jiang
- Reducing grief during the merger of two competitive companies – Ashoke Maitra
- Creating alignment and integration between management and journalists – Ashoke Maitra
- Changing mindsets to change the organisation – Ramón Ollé
- Conducting 360 degree reviews with senior management – N. S. Raghavan
- Unity of thought, word, and action – Ananth Raman

Organisational Culture – Creating and sustaining

- Exposing employees to spirituality – Floy Aguenza
- Human Values as the guidelines for our business – Francisco Canada
- Two initiatives to cultivate spirit in the organisation – Amber Chand
- Having the intention to make a positive difference – Thomas Daugherty
- Integrating values in everyone's day-to-day work – Thomas Daugherty
- Using storytelling in business – Niranjana Jiang
- Cultivating loyalty – Deependra Moitra
- Showing GOD – G. Narayana
- Quietude and introspection – James Sinclair
- Explicit and implicit spirituality in the organisation – Magnus Vrethammar
- Current style of leading – Janiece Webb

Organisation – Quality Assurance Programmes

- Standing firm for having the best – John Behner
- Implementing quality programmes – Deependra Moitra
- Unity of thought, word, and action – Ananth Raman

1. CONFLICT RESOLUTION (5 STORIES)

Behner, John R. – El Salvador

“Former Country Manager for Nabisco in El Salvador”

Spiritual Theme

“Realising God by serving others.”

Only saying “serving everyone” does not include that, which is the most important to me, which is to realise my oneness with God.

Treating competitors and distributors with trust and respect

When Nabisco established its operation in El Salvador and I became the Country Manager, they also were the owners of Del Monte, a huge producer of canned fruits. Products from both these companies, Nabisco and Del Monte, were distributed by another company but by the same fellow who was also a good friend of mine. Now, under the law, we could go in and pay an indemnity to that company and just take those products away from him. So he was afraid that this was what I was going to do.

But I was his personal friend. We talked it over, and he said to me: “I want to tell you what happened with Del Monte. When I was a young boy, 26 years old, I went to San Francisco to meet with the people from Del Monte and tell them I wanted to be their distributor in El Salvador. I sat on their doorstep for three days until they received me. I finally convinced them and they gave me the distribution. That was my first product. This is a line I don’t want to lose.” He said: “I’ll make you a deal. If you don’t take Del Monte from me, I’ll give you Nabisco.”

So I said, “Well, we are going to start manufacturing some of Del Monte’s products here, and I am going to collect royalty on these products. I’ll let these products be sold through you, and you can continue to sell the Del Monte brand and bring other Del Monte products from the USA. But I am going to get the royalty.” And so we had a mutually beneficial agreement.

Another very important thing was our distribution agreements. For a while, we distributed for different companies. The philosophy was that there didn’t necessarily need to be a written contract to be a distributor, unless the other party wanted it. I would say that if we are doing a good job for you, you won’t want to get rid of us, and there won’t be any problem. But if you see that there are not enough sales or business, it’s not going to be worth your while, and it probably isn’t worth our while either. We had these tremendous distribution agreements that didn’t have anything in writing, and yet the companies were very happy, and it shouldn’t have been any other way.

To get back to this spiritual thing, first of all everybody has to do his own thing and not expect that somebody else does something for him. You should do the best you possibly can. In a spiritual sense, every job that we do is important, however small it is. So, if you have taken on the distribution of a product, from a spiritual standpoint you are going to do the best job that you can possibly do to get that product out to as many people as you can at the lowest price you can. If you do that, the other party is going to be very pleased, and the relationship is going to continue, and then it will be profitable in the long run.

Covey, Stephen R. – USA

“Vice Chairman of FranklinCovey, a global professional services firm based in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One of my mottoes serves as a powerful spiritual theme for me: “Live life in crescendo.” In other words, the most important work you’ll ever do is still ahead of you.

Another such spiritual theme for me would be: “Educate and obey your conscience.” Educating as I speak of it here involves getting into the sacred literature of all the great traditions that have had enduring value and then consciously living true to what you have learned. The more you live true to it, the stronger your conscience becomes. A constant effort is required to stay on track with such stewardship.

Institutionalising win-win agreements

One time in the USA I was working with a man whose insurance company was suffering under internal competition. I had attended their annual celebration where about 20 to 30 people received big awards. I asked, “Did you hire the other people as losers?” He said, “Oh, no, they will have their chance next year.” I said, “Nevertheless you have got about 800 losers out there and only 30 winners. Everyone can be a winner; you have just got to change your mind-set from scarcity to abundance.” He had a fine character and said, “I would like that, but how do we do it?” He didn’t know how, it was not a character issue, it was a competence issue.

I said, “Turfism in your company is a result of the way you have designed your reward system; it nurtures cutthroat internal competition.” He asked, “What can one do?” I said, “Set up win-win agreements. These are agreements where those you want to inspire participate in designing the agreement – the reward system – where if some achieve their goals, all the rest benefit, this is a win-win system where everyone can win. Get off this internal competition.” He had an abundance mentality and immediately responded to the need. Now that he was aware of the challenge, he had to develop the competence for designing and institutionalising participative win-win agreements. He became so inspired that he and his employees designed the new system – and within one year 80 percent of his organisation was producing per person what 3 percent, 30 people, had produced the year before. The pie got so large. Unfortunately, a lot of people operate from the paradigm of scarcity, where the pie is only so large.

Designing win-win solutions

I am working now with a federal judge in producing another book to be called *Blessed are the Peacemakers*. It’s for attorneys, for those who hire attorneys, for those who train attorneys, and for those who don’t want to hire attorneys. Now this judge is getting so good at designing win-win solutions that he hardly ever goes to court. He gets the plaintiffs and defendants to settle in chambers, not through compromise but through synergy. This approach simply changes the relationship between the parties. Now that he is getting known for this competence he is being used by other judges to train them. And his trial docket (the list of cases to be tried) is several times larger than the dockets of his colleagues because he knows how to do this design work; his competency and his fine character make him trustworthy, and this in turn helps him to establish the trust that is a precondition for win-win settlements. A book I am working on about this for children in elementary school is going to be called *And the Little Child Shall Lead Them*.

Speaking of win-win arrangements in legal matters reminds me of a powerful experience I had some years ago. I worked with a land developer, who was in big trouble. His bank wanted to foreclose as he was not living up to the terms of the mortgage. At the same time as he desperately sought to avoid the foreclosure, he was seeking additional funding to finish and market the land so he could repay the bank – but neither the bank nor other financial institutions would provide such additional funding before he made the overdue payments. All the while, there was lots of legal fighting going on. The legal costs grew and grew while the property deteriorated and was becoming an eyesore for the people who already lived there and for the city. I worked with the developer and he agreed to establish a meeting with the bank officials. The atmosphere was very unpleasant, there was a palpable tension and lack of trust, and the bank officials were extremely reluctant – in fact their attorney had committed them to say absolutely nothing. He feared that any statements they might make could compromise the bank's position.

I spoke to the group for a long time about principles-centred leadership. Then I went to the blackboard and did the best I could to convey to them our understanding of the bank's concerns. At first the bank officials and their attorney were quiet, but gradually as we communicated our win-win intentions, based on the principle of seeking first to understand their position before we would try to have them understand our position, they began to open up. Once they began to feel understood, the whole atmosphere changed. There was excitement, optimism that a peaceful settlement could be arrived at.

After about three hours, although they were still convinced of the correctness of their standpoint, they felt understood. With this, their defensiveness melted away and they were open to listen to the developer's concerns. We wrote these concerns on the other side of the blackboard. All of this led to a deeper understanding around the table as to how poor the communication had been earlier, and as to how many misunderstandings and suspicions had resulted. So now there was an awareness both of chronic pain and the progress being made towards synergy. The atmosphere became positive and creative. At this point the developer made his first recommendations, and all present could see that it was an attempt at finding a win-win solution. Further discussion led to the recommendation being reworked so that at the end of the meeting the developer and the bank's representatives could leave the meeting with a plan that could be jointly presented to both the city and the Home Owners Association. In spite of a number of continuing difficulties, the legal fighting ended and the project was successfully completed.

Developing win-win performance agreements is a central activity of a leader. With processes that create and support such agreements, problems with external stakeholders be transformed into manageable, interactive, interdependent realities where synergies can develop. And also internally such performance agreements can lead to synergistic processes that work – employees can manage themselves within such an agreement's framework, something that is now of vital importance in this knowledge-worker age.

Cuneo, Federico – Peru

“Senior Partner with Ernst & Young in Peru”

“Chair of Peru 2021, an NGO comprised of business executives working on sustainable development and corporate social responsibility for the country”

Spiritual Theme

Unity with the rest of the world, love, eternal life and light – those would be words I would use as a theme.

Solving business conflicts

I think people perceive when you are coming from a spiritual state, or when you vibrate at that level so-to-speak. I think people can see more than the physical. Even though we don't always realise it immediately, we do perceive when another person is fair or trustworthy, we can see that he has something in him like that. When you have spirituality, then you unconsciously portray it to others.

About four months ago, we were having a very difficult time with some of our regional partners and investors. I approached the upcoming meeting by meditating and imagining their faces as being happy. I imagined telling them at the start of the meeting how I would be straight with what I had to say, and that I wanted the good for all of us.

You must realise this meeting was like a battlefield. We had brought in two lawyers, and they brought in three lawyers who loved to fight. As it turned out, both groups came to a place where they could see that through me we could find a solution to our problem. Since then another problem has come up and now we are in the middle of trying to solve that one.

I think that spirituality and meditation are so useful in business and should become a practice. When there are conflicts between family corporations or between two corporations, they usually put them into the hands of lawyers. This can make it worse and can get very expensive. So I think that people who have this spiritual philosophy of life or this discipline can solve these problems, because both sides can trust them.

Sometimes there is a need for someone who has this spiritual discipline to facilitate or mediate these types of problems because the ego gets in the way. I think people are more willing to put off their ego to a third party like this if that person is a righteous person.

Even though I was not a third party when we were trying to solve this problem, both sides still trusted me. At one point there was a break in the negotiations and they asked me to be involved. I told them that I would not betray my partners for them; that I would only live by my convictions. To me this is an honest way to be in life.

These conflicts are very complicated and I am still in the process of solving them. But if I can communicate at a higher level, or vibrate at a higher level, then I know we can tap into the collective soul where I can really understand their needs and where we can become one with each other.

Maitra, Ashoke – India

“Former Director of Human Resources for the Times of India”

“Founder of the Centre for Human Resource Development and the Sri Ramakrishna International Institute of Management in India”

Spiritual Theme

I think my spiritual theme is “Manifestation of latent Divinity.”

Practicing non-violence in the workplace

When I worked with Tata, I had not recruited one director's daughter because of inadequate merits, so he was very upset with me. He said to me, "I'll throw you out of the company. You are not recruiting my daughter, so I am going to sack you." I said, "Why do you want to sack me? I will go." He said, "Where will you stay? Are you going to live under a tree?" I said, "It makes no difference where I stay, God has brought me into this world, God will take care. So if it is giving you so much anxiety for me to stay here, then it is best that I go. I do not want you to suffer from anxiety because of me."

He said, "Okay you go" because he wanted to test me. I immediately took my resignation letter and gave it to Mr. J.R.D. Tata, because I was his executive assistant. J.R.D. Tata asked me why I was resigning. I said, "Sir, I do not want to create anxiety in anyone, so I am going." He asked me why I was going and I told him to ask the director. So J.R.D. called this director in front of me and asked him what had happened. He was so embarrassed. J.R.D. said, "This guy is going and I am going to suffer. He even keeps my medicines properly. So why are you sending him away and he is not even complaining about it?" The director explained to him that I had not recruited his daughter on merits and that he had gotten very angry and shouted at me. J.R.D. said, "He is only following the company's policy." The director said, "Yes, but I lost my cool. I told him to go out of anger and now he has taken it to the extreme and has given his resignation in a letter. He is doing drama." J.R.D. said, "He is not doing drama. He is going because you threatened to take action; that is why he is going."

I so readily agreed to go because I believe in Gandhiji's theory of ahimsa, non-violence. If you want to do violence on me, I will put my body before you. But why do you want to do violence and suffer later? Gandhiji's philosophy was one of non-violence. Gandhiji used to tell the British, "Why do you want to fine me, I am coming freely. If you want to hammer me and beat me do what you want if that gives you satisfaction. But I don't want you to suffer because of me." So these are ingrained values in me also. I say the same thing to my wife. If she feels upset, then I will go away because I do not want her to be upset and have her blood pressure go up. I do not want to be the cause of her unhappiness. For me it is better if I go. I do not want to fight. This has worked for me throughout my life time and again,

2. CHANGING THE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE (10 STORIES)

Chattopadhyay, A. K. – India

“Former Senior Vice President of ACC Limited Refractories Division in India”
“Executive Director of Tata Refractories, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme is a combination of the four goals found in my spiritual view of life:

- To align oneself with a super power
- To find out the reasons within oneself
- To have faith in others
- To have a caring nature

Turning around a failing organisation

When I initially came in to head the operations of ACC Refractories in 1991, I saw right away that there was a big distance between the management and the workers. There was also not enough information being shared between them, so the workers felt totally disillusioned about what was going on. They had totally lost faith in management. To me, the workers are a part of the whole game and you cannot win the game without taking them into proper consideration.

So I started by working with the people. As a management team, we started working closely together with the factory workers and started sharing information with them. We shared what was happening and what was good or what was bad. Slowly the workers responded to this very nicely. I regained the faith of those people. After two years or so, they began to listen more to us than to their union leaders. So naturally the senior management people became their leaders and this was a big transformation.

The first thing I did was to introduce a monthly meeting, which we called a safety meeting. The idea was to address what had happened in the last month, what our market share was, how we performed, where we went wrong, where we went right, and how to learn from the things we did right. It used to be a one-hour meeting at the gate itself. When the workers came in the morning we were there and we would do some formalities and hold the meeting. We started by hoisting the safety flag. We talked about safety practises, including the accidents that took place in the plants and how they could have been avoided. Then we called a worker to talk about all different kinds of safety. Then we asked the engineers to talk about safety. Finally I would talk about the other things in the company. This became a fantastic thing. After a few months, people were eagerly coming to this meeting to listen.

Then we started a quality circle and brought people together to have interactions. We would visit one operation for the whole day and talk about things. Our people are good people; a few people have simply misguided them. So we tried to bring them into the right kind of attitude. As a management philosophy, we said that we are 80-85% responsible for difficulties with the business, and the workers are 15-20% responsible. That is, if we don't get a good price from the customer, that is management's fault. If we don't buy the raw material at a good price, that is management's fault. If inventory is lying in our yard, that is management's fault. When the material has been given to the worker, then it is their job to process it properly.

As a result of all of this, I also saw how we were doing things that were not getting us anywhere in our business, things that were losing money. So a lot of our business processes and strategies were

changed. We looked at our product profile, we looked at our customer profile, and we looked to see if we could do the business in a different way. We phased out a lot of products that were not aiding the bottom line and it was a good transformation. We also got a lot of good support from the corporate office and that was what was needed.

We revived the business, and today I can tell you very proudly that we have grown from a 180 million rupee business (US\$3.8 million at the mid-2002 exchange rate) to 1,950 million rupee business (US\$41.5 million at the mid-2002 exchange rate) last year. The ten times growth occurred just by using a proper strategy to run the business and giving value to the people. In 1991 we were almost a non-entity and today we are a force to be reckoned with in the country.

Our products are good, our services are good, and our quality is good. During this same period the refractory industry overall was in very bad shape. However, we still managed to grow and grow.

My spiritual philosophy behind all of this was that I was trying to do good for our employees. They were not aware of the things that they were doing that were actually harmful to them. So I wanted to do good and show them how to do good.

Covey, Stephen R. – USA

“Vice Chairman of FranklinCovey, a global professional services firm based in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One of my mottoes serves as a powerful spiritual theme for me: “Live life in crescendo.” In other words, the most important work you’ll ever do is still ahead of you.

Another such spiritual theme for me would be: “Educate and obey your conscience.” Educating as I speak of it here involves getting into the sacred literature of all the great traditions that have had enduring value and then consciously living true to what you have learned. The more you live true to it, the stronger your conscience becomes. A constant effort is required to stay on track with such stewardship.

Spiritual intention in leadership

I find that spiritual intention drives perception, which drives behaviour, which then drives results. If you actually get a person to think in terms of their legacy, what they are trying to really do in the long run to bless people’s lives, it gets them immediately into a spiritual frame of mind. I use this approach all the time in my leadership – and in training people to think in terms of supra-ordinate goals.

Let me give you an example. I was working with a large college in Ontario, Canada. They really had a terrible culture; it was characterised by turfism and fighting and interdepartmental resistances, with everyone looking out for themselves, protecting their own situation, silo thinking, and all that kind of stuff. I worked with them over a period of a year to develop a mission statement that would be supra-ordinate. By this I mean larger than one’s self, larger than one’s own institution. It took them about two years before there was broad agreement, and eventually what happened was that they developed a mission statement to become the yardstick educational institution for all of the state of Ontario – the institution others could measure themselves against. When they really bought into that intention to leave a legacy, the littleness of their souls completely submerged, and the magnanimity of soul exploded inside them.

I have these eye-opening experiences almost on a daily basis, both in my own leadership work at FranklinCovey and in my work helping leaders of other organisations.

Daugherty, Thomas – USA

“Former Vice President of Spiritual Care and Values Integration with the Methodist Health Care System in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One theme for me would be caring and compassion. Another would be faithfulness. A part of that has to do with persistence and perseverance, courage and humility.

For me, the Christian cross itself evokes all of this for me because it is such a powerful symbol of the Divine-human encounter. It represents the very best and the very worst of human experience, and it also represents the ultimate in God’s love and compassion for all humankind.

The Divine-human encounter is certainly a theme that expresses all of this for me.

Starting from the top

As I contemplate how to develop the programmes we have here, and how to disseminate our values throughout the organisation, I draw a lot from my background in pastoral care, counselling and teaching. But this is also where I have to recognise my own limitations. This is where one of our consultants has been such a resource for us because she brings a rich background in human resources and organisational development, and I have learned a lot from her. One of the things I have learned from her is that we have to take this spiritual approach into the organisation at all levels.

However, I knew from the beginning that it had to start at the top, and some of our most difficult challenges have been working with the senior management group. At the same time, one of the most rewarding, spiritually enriching aspects of this endeavour has been watching these same senior people get involved and articulate their own spirituality. The five values we are now focused on, I CARE (integrity, compassion, accountability, respect and excellence), really came together for us in our CEO Council.

While we have a system-wide committee of people called the “Systems Spiritual Care and Values Integration Committee” that generated a lot of the initial thinking about our values, it was the CEO Council that really embraced them; and they continue to be involved in the leadership of what we are doing. They also vacillate and waver from time to time, so I stay connected with them and continue to work with them; this is where my spiritual values and relationship skills have really helped me a lot.

Franklin, Carol – Switzerland

“Former Head of Human Resources for Swiss Re Insurance in Switzerland”
“Former CEO of the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in Switzerland”

Spiritual Theme

Caring for and being responsible for the earth and its inhabitants. Be responsible. Be the change you want to see in the world. Help move the world forward.

Changing people's behaviour

Within the ten years before I joined WWF, 9 CEOs had left, and the year before I joined they did not even have a CEO. When I joined they had especially been looking for somebody from business, but the employees were not so happy with this, because they thought it was a different culture; and so it was. This gave me a relatively difficult start, because a lot of the employees were totally against me and opposed to me simply because I came from the world of business.

We went into a new strategy, the conception of which I was able to participate in from the beginning, which was very lucky for me. That strategy worked quite well. The strategy was to change peoples' behaviour – to show them that you have to change your own behaviour if you want to change the world. It was kind of Gandhian, "Be the change you want to see in the world." If you want to change the world, you have to find the longest lever, and that is business, because if you get business on your side, it is easier to change peoples' behaviour. That meant that on the one hand we wanted to work with business, we wanted to "green" business. On the other hand we wanted to change the consumers' behaviour - which meant that we were showing them the ways and means to change their behaviour. By doing that, they could influence politics and they could influence business, because obviously business does what the consumers want it to do. That was very successful. We had partnerships; we introduced the first and only real "green" electricity at the time and worked well with lots of corporations. We had an excellent image, and were constantly present in the media, always on a very positive note.

In Switzerland, as in many countries, if you look at the credibility ranking, the NGOs have the top credibility, and at the bottom you have the politicians. As an NGO, our biggest capital was credibility, and that was something we really had to look after. It all worked relatively well for about two to two and a half years, but then again, as with my predecessors, we ran into a structural problem. Most of the NGOs in Switzerland are somewhere between 20 and 40 years old, and they moved away from being in opposition to everybody else, and from being a grass-roots honorary based membership or contributor-organisation to a professional organisation.

There was a gap between the professional way that 180 people worked in the national administration, and the way the chapters in each of the 26 cantons (Swiss 'states') were run with more or less grass-roots-people, who had great local interests. The difficulty was trying to goad them into accepting the strategy, recognising that what they did was very important, but had to be the same as what we were doing on a national level and what we were doing on an international level.

So we had the international, the national, and the local level, but in these 26 chapters they had always been able to do whatever they wanted and had not been really integrated into the overall strategy. They didn't think it was great fun, because they felt we were curtailing their rights. So there was a gap between the locals and the professionals. The locals said, "We are not being paid for this, we are working on an honorary basis, so we can do whatever we want to." We said no, and my suggestion at the time was to pay them something, like the firemen who work on a voluntary basis. Then we could draw up contracts with them and say, this is what we agree to do; you agree to do this, and we agree to do that, and if you don't do that, then we don't want you any more. They didn't like that very much, obviously.

These chapters elected over half of the members of the board. So people from the chapters went to the board and said “We don’t like what the professional part is doing, because WWF is the local part” and some of the Board members, having been elected by the chapters, agreed.

Another thing is that the board had no idea how such an organisation with 180 employees and 45 million Swiss Francs of income (roughly US\$35 million at the time of the interview), in my opinion, needed to be managed and led. If you change the strategy, at some moment in time you will have to talk to the people and see if they want to be in this organisation - to see whether the organisation is right for them. If you or they come to the conclusion that the organisation is not right for them, then you have to do your best to keep things on a friendly basis so that maybe you can still work with that person, somehow, in the future. If the organisation changes its focus, then you possibly also have to make changes in the organisation and change the way the people work. But the board didn’t understand this strategy. Also, they didn’t keep their word. They decided things in board meetings and did the opposite two days later.

So what happened? They fired me! But because the employees had by accepted this strategy and supported it, and because the media was very positive about the changes, the employees as well as the media stood up and said, “You can’t do this, you can’t fire her.” So WWF was again all over the media and the organisation lost an awful lot of members. Practically all of Switzerland and all the employees stood up and said, “No, this person is better than the board, you have to fire the board and not her,” which they didn’t do of course; the board won. But that’s why for me, being fired was not such a bad experience. That was three years of WWF.

I knew exactly what I was doing. Eight months before I was fired I went home and said to my husband, “If I carry on like I am working now, they are going to fire me. Can we live with this?” And my husband said, “You can’t live differently.” This for me was an ethical question. The board was going against the organisation, and I found that I was not there to work for myself; I was there to work for a cause. With all these employees who were of the same opinion, I was willing to jeopardise my job because of the cause. That is why all the employees and all the media went for this. They all said, “This is what ethics in business is about.”

Being fired was for me one of the most important points of my life. For me it was simply a matter of principle - if you believe in something, if you believe in something good for the cause, you stick to it.

Jiang, Niran – Australia

“Formerly Senior Trends Manager for Coca Cola and Marketing Manager for S. C. Johnson in the USA”

“CEO for the Institute of Human Excellence in Australia”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme would be interconnectedness, wonderment, and compassion.

Shifting the thinking of the company

I used the same approach at S.C. Johnson as I did later on at Coca Cola with regard to creating an opening for a large acquisition. The company was experiencing stagnant growth, as most established businesses do. But unfortunately, in general we operate on a growth paradigm where zero growth is not acceptable. I feel resigned to accept that paradigm. In that paradigm, you scare business by

showing that they go down hill if they don't innovate, which is true. We invited the Boston Consulting Group, BCG, to do a major study of where growth could come from. Based on that study we were ready to look for radical changes for the business.

What stimulates wonderment is when you truly connect the inner life forces. Three of us, who connected really well, said, "Let's take this project." We went into hiding and identified the target for a new acquisition. It was Ziploc – a small plastic storage bag. Everybody said "no", as it was not in our traditional category of household cleaning products; we didn't have the manufacturing capability, and we didn't have any knowledge about making bags. Looking at acquisition criteria, everything said "no, no, no!" But intuitively this was really right for the three of us, and we were amazed at the power of the brand, as a USA brand magazine had listed Ziploc as number 17 on a list of 100 top brands together with names like Disney and Harley Davidson. We knew all the "no's", but we felt a lot of wonderment about this, almost a passion; it was not just about valuation, but about future potentials.

After doing the traditional marketing research, we kept on brainstorming ideas, though not in a way according to the manual of S.C. Johnson. This was pure idea-flow because of the passion and the life force, the wonderment and the mystery of why we were so attracted to this brand. We talked it over in a restaurant where we were joking, having fun, a lot of humour, and all the ideas became very visual and graphic. We opened up to tremendous creativity and were able to catch all those ideas later on. We put everything beautifully on the board for the CEO and said, "This is your future business". After ten minutes he said, "I got it, we're buying it!" The whole senior management committees' jaws dropped. They said, "But what about manufacturing, we don't know how to..." "We'll learn," the CEO said. The company paid US\$ 1.1 billion in 1996-7, and that became their largest acquisition. Today that business has provided the largest growth of the company. I got headhunted away, but I still got the credit for what had happened and I was told that it was amazing how I had been able to shift the thinking of the company.

My spirituality brought to this exciting project a true respect for and feeling of equality on the soul level with everybody in the small team; nobody was afraid of opening up. We were passionate. We had a strong curiosity, which I see as spirituality, as a life force. We got connected to a universal power, and we all felt a great commitment. This is why we succeeded.

Maitra, Ashoke – India

"Former Director of Human Resources for the Times of India"

"Founder of the Centre for Human Resource Development and the Sri Ramakrishna International Institute of Management in India"

Spiritual Theme

I think my spiritual theme is "Manifestation of latent Divinity."

Reducing grief during the merger of two competitive companies

The first story I have to share is when we were merging NOCIL and another petrochemical company. The two companies were very culturally different and were organised very differently; one had only seven levels of management and the other had 19 levels of management. There was a lot of hatred between these two companies because for years they had fought each other to prove who was better. Now one of the companies was merging into the other and would be losing their identity. I was the HR person for NOCIL, which was the surviving company, and I had to lead this merger.

To make things worse, the owner of NOCIL named the managing director of the other company as the managing director of the combined companies. This managing director was a totally unprofessional man. As a result the original managing director of NOCIL, who had a tremendous amount of credibility and was well liked by the workers, resigned in disgust.

The owner of NOCIL, Mr. Mafatlal, decided that the merger had to be done seamlessly, but did not give any direction. So I thought that the best way to merge would be to integrate people at the spiritual level and therefore I experimented. No one stopped me since from the initial stage the shareholders got good feedback.

The first thing I realised was that I must not identify myself with either company, while at the same time taking full ownership of my HR position and responsibilities. I knew that I had to be clear and often thought of Vivekananda's talk that we should be able to attach and detach with equal ease. I became detached so I could properly facilitate the process.

You see, I knew my job, even back then, was to take people out of grief. I knew I had to be involved in it, but out of it; I had to be like a lotus in the water, but not of it. I began to read the spiritual texts as much as possible – Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Sathya Sai Baba, Rajnish – in order to school myself on being detached with equipoise.

I realised we had to create one HRD department and one marketing department, both of which would have equal representation from each company. I knew that the first step was to have them learn to sit with each other, nothing else. I called all the top management from both sides and told them, "We have to create a new vision for this company. Your purpose cannot be to hate each other, let us go beneath all of this and see what our purpose is. The fact is we have been legally merged, so what do we do?" They needed to connect spiritually.

At first there were a lot of grievances that surfaced. By the afternoon, we said okay, it is the worst thing to happen in life, but it has happened. Now what do we do? We started examining the question of purpose and in three days time we came to a top management integration of the purpose of the combined companies.

I then conducted 44 workshops of two days each to help employees understand this new vision for the company and what we were out to do together. It was a residential workshop and the first day people sat separately, even during the lunch they remained separate. By the end of the two days there was some amount of mutual respect where they could at least look at each other and sit next to each other. That was followed by a large number of sensitivity training workshops, which I conducted. These workshops taught them how to be sensitive to others and to find their own space and their own theory in life.

I got people together, through a participatory process, to develop respect and positive feelings for each other. I believe that if I had not been detached and acted with equipoise that I could have never achieved this. I was not an external facilitator; I was the HR head of the surviving company. As such, they had every right to turn on me and think that I had betrayed them. My transparency and credibility had to be grounded on my spiritual foundation because people knew I was a spiritual person

In the sensitivity training and workshops we did, we first asked them to define their purpose in life. We didn't ask them to define the purpose of the company; we asked them to define their purpose, to define what they are here to do in life and what they want from life. Most of the people said they wanted happiness and satisfaction from life. We asked them, "How do you get satisfaction?" We pointed out that you get satisfaction by not hating anyone; you get satisfaction when you are not

greedy, and when you do not have anger. When they pointed out that they were angry because of the merger, I reminded them that the merger has nothing to do with them personally; it is a legal merger and they should not get so attached to it.

This is the first stage where we had them begin their introspection. Spirituality is all about introspection. When you put people in an introspective mode in an exercise, then they start to question their own life and their own reason for existence, such as what they are here to do and how they will achieve it. Then, many times they see the futility of getting angry and see that they are doing exactly the opposite of what they want to achieve.

If my goal is to be the best HRD Director, then I need to examine whether anger is going to help me, or whether it will be an obstacle. If I realise that it is going to be an obstacle then I need to examine why I am getting angry in the first place.

My overriding mission during the entire process was to reduce grief and not increase grief. I was able to spiritually detach myself while being part of it, and I wanted to transfer this knowledge to them. This detachment comes naturally for me because I have stayed with so many saints. However, this level of detachment was not happening for them and as a result they were suffering from grief.

My call as the head of HR was more of a compassionate call to them. It was out of compassion that I wanted the employees to forget what was happening in the company and to just look after themselves. I think the reason they accepted what I said is because they saw I was not concerned about the company; I was concerned about them and their grief.

I reminded them that this was actually a great opportunity. I told them to treat life as if it were a play and to know that things are going to happen with or without their will many times. If you learn to detach yourself and look at what is going on as a spectator, you can have a much better life.

We had one of the smoothest mergers in the history of India of two competitive petrochemical companies. We had no press reference, even though we could have been the centre of attention in the news at that time.

Creating alignment and integration between management and journalists

When I came to the Times Group about 7 years back, I began with a very difficult assignment. There was a big fight between the journalists and the management and they each had major criticisms of each other. I knew I had to create a clear alignment and integration of these two groups as we were all working for the same paper and for the same purpose.

The first thing I did was to come and sit here in the editor's cabin. You see, this is the journalist area of the Times of India; this is not the management floor. When I came and sat here the first thing they asked me was, "How can you come and sit here? You are from the other side." I said, "But I thought we were all on the same side." They said, "No, you are from the other side." So I said, "Fine, I am sitting here and if you hate me I will go away. But it is your choice because I have taken my first step not to have any discrimination. I have made my first move to show you that we are all one, because that is what I believe. I believe in Vedanta and I believe that all of us are the same. If you think I am some kind of skunk, then I will leave, but give me 15 days to see whether you want me to sit here or not."

After 15 days I went to the floor and asked them whether I should stay or go. They said no and asked me to stay. They were very happy that a management man was there because, if nothing else, I would at least make sure the bathrooms were clean. I have now been on this floor for over six years.

During those early days I held a strategic planning workshop that was completely initiated by me. Because there was a lot of misunderstanding between the journalists and management, I felt there was an acute need to bring them together through a participatory process to create a sense of well-being, understanding and camaraderie between them. After all, all of us worked for the same cause.

My colleagues, who are Directors, in fact were very critical. They opined I was wasting my time trying to change the behaviour of journalists based on their past record. But I persisted, with my faith and my shareholders blessings, because I strongly believe every human being is intrinsically good and our work should be able to bring out our best.

Even the owner of the Times Group warned me that the journalists would not attend this strategic planning workshop. The first person to walk into the workshop was the resident editor of the Times of India and then came the Economic Times editor. Someone asked one of the editors why she came and she said, "I came because Ashoke called me and I know Ashoke doesn't see any difference between the management and journalists. If anyone else had called, I would not have come." All the editors came and all the managers came and we had a 3-day workshop to decide the future of the company. It worked. I am happy.

Ollé, Ramón – The Netherlands

"President of Epson Europe in The Netherlands"

Spiritual Theme

"To know thyself."

Changing mindsets to change the organisation

The most difficult part of changing an organisation is to change the mindsets of the people. Why? Because we are living in a multi-cultural environment where everyone has been educated in a different manner and we are not sharing the same values. Even the basic concepts of people are different from culture to culture.

Designing change is a logical matter with a certain risk. But at the end what makes it really happen is when everyone aligns their mindsets in one direction. Some people are able to re-adjust to the new way of thinking, and some people are not capable of adjusting their mind in order to think differently from the way they did in the past. I have discovered that people do not want to give up their old traditional concepts because that is where they are more comfortable. This is why many organisations are not changing today.

When I am facing very critical situations, I impose learning problems on our people. I try to help them clarify their inner understanding of the problem we are facing so that we can move from the inner understanding to the outside action. In other words, I have 100% trust in the Chinese proverb: first know and help yourself, then your family, then your village, then your country.

Whenever I am passing through a critical period in my own life, if I try to first put my priorities on things outside, on the external world, I never succeed. Everything works out after I put myself in order inside. When I am capable of reflecting within myself on what my internal problems are, what my internal dreams are and what the internal consequences of the acts I am considering are,

automatically I can also work with others to help them to look within and to put themselves in order. All of the people in the world have basically the same desires, the same emotions, the same loves, the same fears. So, if I am capable of understanding this, then I can understand the different cultures we work with and in. If I do not do this, then I cannot really understand anything.

I discovered that when it is not possible for a person to change his mindset, even when he has had training and coaching, then he must be let go and replaced. We are talking about the human spirit and we must do all we can to bring out this spirit, but sometimes there are limits. The change must come from within and not from the outside; we cannot do anything if a person is not willing to change.

We all have the same rights and obligations within the organisation, which means we have to be respectful of others, we have to respect society, and we have to be respectful of the rules. This is fundamental to Epson's leadership philosophy. I do on occasion meet people who are not following the rules of the organisation, and when I do I will invite them to leave. I do not compromise on this; I will send them out of our system. To me, a person is not married to the company; when something is not right, it is better to part ways.

When you make a transformation in your company, you will see it in the faces of the people, in the way they are working, and in the meetings you have with them. You will see the transformation being manifested in many ways. Of course, you cannot measure happiness, and you cannot measure commitment. But you will see it.

Raghavan, N. S. – India

“Founding Director and former Joint Managing Director of Infosys in India”

Spiritual Theme

“Love and trust” automatically came to my mind as my theme.

Conducting 360 degree reviews with senior management

We had a Management Council at Infosys, headed up by the Managing Director that ran the whole show. There were about sixteen people on the council at that time. I told them I wanted to conduct 360-degree appraisals and asked for their permission to do this for everyone who was on the council except the MD. I told them that I would personally talk to the people and collect the information for each council member.

Since this was a first-time experiment and they were all very senior people, I made them two guarantees. I told them that I would not share with the MD any of the detailed information I was collecting, except for an MC summary of the feedback. I also told them that I would be the only person to have the information, and that I would do the analysis and give feedback to each one of them. I did this because I knew that it was important to maintain this type of confidentiality. Nobody could really object because this was something good, and so they agreed.

I prepared two different components to this 360-degree appraisal. One had to do with their leadership abilities and the other with their behaviour. I created the questionnaire and had both a number rating and a place for qualitative remarks about them. I had them rate each other, and I also had a few subordinates rate them.

This took about three months for me to do – it was a very big job. I wanted to test it out and show them the importance of this kind of feedback. When I started having people fill out the questionnaires, I warned them not to try to get out of this by saying that they did not know the person that well. I told them that even if they didn't feel they knew the person very well, they still had their own perceptions of them and they should report on those. I told them that perceptions drove their behaviour and therefore were equally valid and important for me to collect and then give feedback on. I asked them to be very truthful and not to worry about it.

To help them understand the importance of this whole process, I told them this story... There was a company that was going downhill, and the board decided to get a new CEO to turn it around. After a couple of months, the new CEO got a feel for the whole place and realised that some of the senior managers were critically under-performing.

He called one of the senior under-performing managers in for a talk. The CEO told him that even though he hadn't been with the company a long time, he understood that the manager was not performing well. He told him that he must improve his performance or he would have to go. The manager reacted and told him, "I don't know where you got this information. If you look at my performance reports you'll see that I have been rated very good year after year. I am a very good performer. I think you have gotten some wrong information."

The CEO then told him to go to two of his other senior colleagues and ask them to openly tell him the truth of what they thought of his performance. Then he told him to come back to him after he had done this and they would see what to do. So the senior manager went to his colleagues and told them he wanted their honest opinion and asked them to tell him the truth. All of them told him the truth that the CEO was correct that he was not performing well.

The senior manager came back to the CEO and admitted that what he, the CEO, had said was true. He said to the CEO, "I do not feel bad about getting this negative feedback. What I feel bad about is that I have been here for 15 years and I have been thinking that I was doing a great job. I thought I was contributing. I wish someone had told me the truth years ago. Maybe this wasn't even the best place for me to work to bring out my expertise and strengths. Now I feel so miserable, I have been working here thinking that I was a great contributor and actually I am not."

I like to tell people this story because it shows them how important their honest feedback is. I tell them that they are doing another person a disservice if they are not honest in their feedback. I also tell them that if one person gives a negative feedback, you can dismiss it as biased or that the individual has not known him well. If two people give the same feedback, then you better start getting concerned. But if five people give similar feedback, then it cannot be rejected and needs to be attended to. If your assessment is that the negative feedback is just a perception issue, then you need to change that perception. On the other hand if you are convinced that it must be the truth, then you need to try hard to change, as these are leadership attributes that are important.

There were a lot of things that came out and in many ways it was not comfortable. Everyone got a good sense of where they stood. A lot of people came back to me and said that this was a very useful exercise – that they had received benefit from it and that they were better able to understand themselves.

Raman, Ananth – USA

"Chairman of Graphtex, Inc. a manufacturing company in the USA"

Spiritual Theme

“Awareness” and “Realising Divinity”

Unity of thought, word, and action

There was a time when we were introducing ISO 9000, which was a system of quality control measures for our company. One of our companies was a job shop where we do specialty items for our customers. Since these products are made for specific applications it is extremely difficult to standardise things and is a very complicated process. This made it a difficult environment to introduce these types of quality measures, since it involves a lot of rigid procedures.

The expert said, “This is all very simple. All you need to do is write down each of the procedures that you are already doing. You don’t have to make any improvement; you don’t have to say anything else except exactly the way you are doing it. This has nothing to do with right or wrong, you simply say what you are doing and do what you say.” Even after he said all of this my fellows were still completely worried.

One evening I was thinking about this while attending a study circle with my spiritual group. I saw that all of this was simply talking about unity of thought, word, and action. So, I called in my employees and gave them a talk about unity of thought, word and action. I told them, “This is nothing but the concept of having what you feel, what you write and how you act be the same. This is all that ISO 9000 is about.”

So we went all over the company and said, “The company’s objective with ISO 9000 is to have unity of thought, word and action.” If I had used the word spiritual to describe the basis of this concept, I would have probably gotten some negative reaction. To me I didn’t feel that I needed to tout this as spiritual. It was just truth and honesty, that’s all. When I explained what unity of word, thought and action meant, they understood the concept very easily.

Sometimes they would even come back with an example such as this: “If a customer wants us to deliver a product the next day and we know it is going to take one week, usually we tell them it will be the day after tomorrow so we can buy some time. Can we do that? If we do, then it disturbs the unity of thought, word and action. So, what do we tell them? Do we tell them the truth?”

They started raising all of these questions throughout the departments; I was amazed at the chain reaction that began. So I told them, “Let’s not go mad about this unity of thought, word and action. Let’s have a monthly meeting where we can discuss these problems where you find it difficult to be totally truthful.” I tried to help them see the difference between telling a customer, “no, it won’t go tomorrow, we are having difficulties,” which is the truth, versus “it will go day after tomorrow,” which is a lie. In this way they could still buy some time without promising something which was not going to happen. We continue to have these monthly meetings where we examine these difficult situations and look to see how we can solve them with a unity of thought, word and action.

3. CREATING AND SUSTAINING THE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE (11 STORIES)

Aguenza, Floy – The Philippines

“President and COO of Planters Development Bank in The Philippines”

Spiritual Theme

“What would Jesus do?” “What would the Lord do?”

Exposing employees to spirituality

I believe that people who are well-balanced and spiritual make better employees. I spent a lot of time thinking about how to help nurture the spiritual growth of our people. So I decided I wanted to see how I could expose the employees of the bank to spirituality. Traffic here in Manila is quite difficult, so many of our employees leave their homes very early in the morning, sometimes 5:30 or 6:00 am, and they get back home to their families at 7:00 or 8:00 pm or some even 9:00 pm. So since they spend most of their waking hours in the bank, we must try to help them without sacrificing the objectives of the bank.

We started with letting our people attend retreats as part of our training activities. I send the bank’s branch managers and male officers personal letters of invitation to spiritual retreats, and the turnouts have been quite good with very positive feedback.

Instituting Prayer. I was the only woman in the management committee. Typically, Filipino men are not very comfortable about spirituality, as this goes against the Filipino macho culture. But knowing that our Chairman was himself quite open, I suggested we start our meetings with prayers to which he readily agreed. That was the start of our practice of starting all meetings with a prayer and all important initiatives and occasions with the Holy Mass. This is also how the ecumenical Plantersbank family prayer has developed. We also created a prayer and meditation room where the staff can go if they need some time alone or to pray.

Our Plantersbank family prayer is:

*Lord God, Heavenly King and Father
We thank You for Your continued presence among Your people.
Grant that we may learn
To exercise responsible stewardship
Over all the resources You entrust to us,

That we may consciously use our talents and skills
For the glory of Your name
And the betterment of our fellowmen,
And that our day-to-day decisions
May be in accordance with Your Most Holy Will
Lord, help us to see in every client
An opportunity to be of service
And to be a blessing to the life of another;
To find in our fellow workers
A greater inspiration to give our best
In everything we do.
Teach us always to be Your disciples*

*That we may establish Your kingdom in the marketplace
So that at the end of the day
We may humbly present to You
A Bank that is worthy of Your presence
A Bank with a heart...
A Bank with conscience and compassion
Planters Development Bank.
All these, we pray
In Jesus name. Amen.*

Conducting worship services. Later on, we began the Wednesday and Friday masses. We asked Fr. Armand Robleza, who conducts our retreats, to be our official Chaplain and to guide our spiritual programme. He has been doing this for the last 13 years. We also conduct worship services for those belonging to other denominations which I also try to attend. To this day, I get letters from some of our staff thanking us for these opportunities for spiritual development.

Each year also begins with a grand celebration of thanksgiving to God where officers from our head office and the more than 65 branches all over the country come together to praise and thank God for the blessings, pray, review the past year, recognise people and events, and offer our plans for the coming year.

Since there is a small minority of our employees who are not Catholic, we have worship services for them. I myself also attend worship services of faiths other than mine because I want the employees to feel that they are not marginalised because they are of a different faith. Any time something happens, such as a death in the family, I consciously go out of my way to show that I am concerned about what has happened. We want our employees to be happy and fulfilled working for us and we want our customers to be happy. We really do mean this.

Canada, Francisco Roberto – Argentina

“Director and Partner of Errepar S.A., a major publishing firm in Argentina”

Spiritual Theme

Loving God.

Human Values as the guidelines for our business

Like all difficult things, leading a business becomes easier as time goes by. Seven years ago we developed some principles of action in our company. We began to hold weekly meetings where we discuss leadership according to the principles of my spiritual teacher, as we read about them in a book on management, *Sai Baba's Mahavakya on Leadership*, by Lieut. General in the Indian army, Dr. M.L. Chibber. In these meetings we discuss how to grow the company using spiritual principles. Everybody in the company knows that the three owners are all devotees of the same Indian spiritual teacher.

We hold these meetings with the sales managers, product managers, systems managers, and all the staff. We talk about how to apply the teachings and principles of Spiritual Leadership, both at work and in our daily life.

In these weekly meetings we focus on principles based on the human values of truth, right action, love, peace and non-violence - not on religion. We use examples from all religions, but each person has his own spiritual way. The employees accept this in a wonderful way.

When the company went through hard times for a period of roughly three years, the weekly meetings stopped. The difficult times arose when the company was being split from just one firm into four companies, each with its own newly hired general manager and with the three partners as the board for each of these companies.

Recently we have taken up the weekly meetings again, but have changed them. Now the meetings are being run by trainers in each company and on different levels - with the managers, with the middle management, and with the employees. These trainers have been trained in working with the human values, and the first results of the meetings are beautiful.

But not everyone finds working with us to be so beautiful. Sometimes it happens that an employee doesn't get on well with the company. They find that with the family spirit and the spiritual orientation, which permeates our way of doing business, it has a different vibration than they are used to, and so they leave.

When we, the three owners, worked directly with everybody, there was a certain family spirit in the company. When we began growing as a business and then changed the organisational structure by installing general managers for each of the companies, the spirit of the overall organisation suffered. People who have stayed with us through all the 25 years tell us that they feel that with these weekly meetings, which we began again three months ago, the whole organisation, all four companies, are going to revive the old family spirit.

Chand, Amber – USA

“Founder of the Amber Chand Collection: Global Gifts for Peace and Understanding, an internet-based company in the USA that markets the products of artisans from around the world”

Spiritual Theme

Compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness are words that ring as a spiritual theme for me. Yes, this is a “God-being tapestry.”

Two initiatives to cultivate spirit in the organisation

As a co-founder of this company, I have a very interesting role. I have a tremendous amount of influence, but I have not been interested in seeing it as power. So in everything I do people see me as a co-founder and respect me for that role. It is a status and respect that I hold very humbly.

I know when I walk through this company that employees look to me sort of like a mother, a nurturing spirit. So I try to continually find ways to be that nurturing, reassuring, loving spirit for them. This allows me to authentically be my spirit-self. I am very grateful that I do not have to be any different than who I am. As a result I have been able to actually cultivate a great confidence in others by being more spiritual: they expect it of me, they see it in me, they laugh at me, they dismiss me, all of that.

There are two initiatives that I think my spiritual theme – this beautiful tapestry of compassion, balance, grace, and friendliness – has inspired. I created the first one about a year ago and called it

“tea with Amber.” To me this is exactly the way I see that spirit should work in a company. I was inspired to do this when, one day, my heart sank when I realised that the company had grown to such a degree that I no longer knew everybody. I could not see how I could be in the nurturer role if I didn’t know everyone by name. I thought about this and began to search for a way that I could connect with everyone in the company.

So the idea came to me to just begin to have a cup of tea with every person. The first thing I noticed was that my office was not the nurturing atmosphere that I wanted, so I rearranged my office completely. I created a little sitting area where I have some lamps and plants, I got out my lovely Mexican tea set and then I began to invite people to tea.

One by one people began to come and sit with me for tea. Some people were very nervous because they were sitting with the co-founder. I would make them a cup of tea and what I noticed is that once they began to sip their tea, they would start to relax physically. Once we could both relax with each other, then we could actually open ourselves up to the “art of conversation.”

This whole concept has continued to grow and now it is on the website as a column. Who would have ever thought that it would have blossomed so much? What is so wonderful about this is that it is definitely something that the employees look forward to. It has become seen as a very important part of my work in this company and as a way for us to continue to highlight Eziba as a company with a social conscience.

The second initiative I started early on was to speak to the customers who were unhappy with us. I remembered my childhood where my mother and father taught me to treat a guest who came to our house as God. You do everything you can to make their time with you happy and satisfying and comfortable. So during our first customer training, I told them this story. I told them that at Eziba, I like to feel that the customer is God. So when the customer calls, we drop everything and we listen. People actually listened to what I said and thought it was nice.

We have a fabulous customer service group and yet I still want to speak with all of the unhappy customers. It is actually helpful for our employees to see that the co-founder is working alongside them, supporting the larger work, which is to satisfy all our customers. I always pick up the phone and call the unhappy customers. I begin by apologising to them, “I am so sorry that we have dissatisfied you in some way.” I must tell you that customers are amazed; they cannot believe that one of the founders is taking the time to call them. From this call, I always end up with a happy customer; we usually end up feeling a lot of joy and laugh together. I tell them to call me again if they ever have any problems and I give them my direct line. So it is another way of being thoughtful and it works.

Daugherty, Thomas – USA

“Former Vice President of Spiritual Care and Values Integration with the Methodist Health Care System in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

One theme for me would be caring and compassion. Another would be faithfulness. A part of that has to do with persistence and perseverance, courage and humility.

For me, the Christian cross itself evokes all of this for me because it is such a powerful symbol of the Divine-human encounter. It represents the very best and the very worst of human experience, and it also represents the ultimate in God's love and compassion for all humankind.

The Divine-human encounter is certainly a theme that expresses all of this for me.

Having the intention to make a positive difference

The difference I hope to make here at Methodist Health Care Systems is to enhance the quality of care and the spiritual environments in which that care is given. The title I have now is Vice President of Spiritual Care and Values Integration. Ordinarily, people think the "spiritual care" portion of my title has to do with the chaplains who provide their services in the hospital. While I do have some relationship to the chaplains, they actually report to someone else in the organisation; I don't have administrative responsibilities for them.

What I have tried to communicate since I have been in this position is that spiritual care refers to a quality of caring that we provide in this environment. It is a quality that connects us with the spirit of the organisation and with the spirit of the Divine, which is in our midst. For me, it is something that involves everyone, and not just the chaplains who will always play a prominent role as well. It is a quality of caring that involves our administration, our board members, our housekeeping personnel, our nurses, our physicians, everyone. So it is comprehensive and inclusive. I am hoping to influence the environment where everyone receiving care in any of our hospitals can feel there is a difference in their care and on some level they realise they are receiving spiritual care.

I don't think at this point people consciously choose to come to our hospitals because we have a fine spiritual environment. Primarily, they are coming to the Methodist Health Care System because we have a reputation for having the best physicians and the best track record in taking care of their physical problems. However, this Texas Medical Center is full of hospitals; this is the largest conglomeration of hospitals and health care facilities in the world. So there's something else that I believe does enter into their decision even now, and I think unconsciously people do come here because they expect to receive something different. They may not consciously know what it is, but they feel and expect something different in the environment.

To me, the name "Methodist", which indicates that this organisation is based in Christian principles, does imply in some way that people should be able to expect a difference in the quality of care they receive and the way they are treated. So my work is about cultivating a holistic, comprehensive spiritual environment where this caring can take place. I think the spiritual and the material aspects of health care and healing were once connected. I want to reconnect the aspects of this environment that have been so long disconnected.

Integrating values in everyone's day-to-day work

As we move forward with our values integration effort, one of the things we are trying to do is to integrate these values into every aspect of the employee's life cycle: from the application process to the hiring interviews, all the way through the evaluation processes and exit interviews. We want to hire people who are the kind of people who will live these values and will fit with this environment. While we expect people to have the best clinical and technical competence, we feel that this alone is not enough – a person can be competent and capable; however, he or she may not fit into this culture. Living these values, which will in turn cultivate a spiritual environment, is just as important. The way our employees treat each other in their workgroup, the way they treat their internal customers, the way they treat people who come here to be served – the way they go about treating people is just as important as *what* they do in their job.

The training process we currently have in progress will continue from now on. It will take us twelve months just to train our current 8,000 employees. However, we plan to make it a part of our new employee orientation. We also plan to expand this training as well.

The next phase we will be introducing in the next couple of months is called the “workgroup commitment process.” This is a process in which we ask all executives, managers, directors, and supervisors to engage the people who report to them in a process of looking at and integrating the five core values. They will first ask “Who are our internal customers and who are our external customers?” and “How well are we doing with the services we provide them?” Next, they will take each of the five values and ask “in our particular workgroup what does it mean to...” For example, in our day-to-day working with each other, what does it mean to show respect? This is exploring group-specific behaviours. I, myself, will start this process with the CEO Council.

Jiang, Niran – Australia

“Formerly Senior Trends Manager for Coca Cola and Marketing Manager for S. C. Johnson in the USA”

“CEO for the Institute of Human Excellence in Australia”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme would be interconnectedness, wonderment, and compassion.

Using storytelling in business

Businesses are more motivated to change when they see crises coming, and more open to change when there is chaos around. By doing Future Trends at Coca Cola, part of my job was almost to scare the people by showing them “the real picture”. I showed them how different the consumers were from what they thought, how different the future would be – not based on cost efficiency, but more on idea-power – and how they could approach making decisions. I painted a picture that had them feel very inadequate, and that created openings.

I started an Urban Teen Connection Project, bringing teenagers to the company, doing a lot of story telling, and learning from their stories. Also in business, stories teach in magic ways, and they don’t preach. We tried to understand teens, to build a brand with teens and to bring this into the process of initiating new PR and new advertising activities in a most competitive landscape. It was about creating growth in a difficult market for a difficult consumer segment, because urban teenagers were turning to other drinks. I started the process by doing strategic planning differently from what they had been doing, and a year later it led to and created good business results. It was a chain effect. I role modelled and gave everyone the credit along the way as a result of the interconnectedness I felt. I had people collaborate rather than compete for credit so they could get a promotion. It was a little cultural change in the company.

Moitra, Deependra – India

“Formerly the youngest General Manager within Lucent Technologies, who at the time had 70,000 employees worldwide”

“Associate Vice President with Infosys Technologies, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

“Living with a purpose” would be my theme. True fulfilment is then the outcome of this journey.

Cultivating loyalty

Fundamentally, I do think that we all need to think about business in a radically different manner. In you look at most major corporations, you will find that basically they all react. What this indicates to me is that our footing is not solid. What good is strategy if it warrants you to react every alternate week? This means, that in actuality, we don't have a strategy. I think that as a corporation we need to change this pattern. We need to be very clear as to whether we want to stay focused and create opportunities, or whether we want to be driven by the market and continuously react.

The reason I am talking about this is that it has a tremendous effect on employees. I personally do not like the word “loyalty” because in today's world the employee cannot be loyal to the corporation, since the corporations are not loyal to the employees. If you look at most companies, the one thing they continue to do is lay off employees when the business takes a downturn. Now I see a fundamental conflict here. On one hand we want to increase the workforce, we want to do great things, we want to bring on new employees, and yet when we get hit financially, the first thing we want to do is get rid of employees. To be honest, we cannot really be financially sound or sustain our financial soundness by only eliminating our employees as a reaction.

If you think about this in family terms, if you have a sick child you do not just get rid of him or her. You have a commitment to your child, and so you do everything you can to help them get well. So I think we need to take a very different approach than what we are doing now. This would be an all-encompassing approach where we make sure that we utilise employee involvement in a manner that helps to make our position in the marketplace solid. We have to understand the emotional side of our employees and make sure that they feel part of the whole process, as opposed to being mere labourers in the process.

Employees are human beings, and they put their hearts and minds and emotions into the development of the business. We cannot play with their emotions, such as when you need them you pat them on the back, and when you don't need them you ruthlessly get rid of them. We have to recognise that the company exists because of its people, and that does call for a spiritual approach. I think this should be the very first step that every business should take in order to progress toward a spiritual way of doing business.

When I think about a company being spiritual, I think that the first and foremost place where spirituality has to be demonstrated is with its stakeholders. We must create a system where we can, without talking about loyalty, have loyalty become ingrained. No one has to talk about loyalty, no one has to ask about loyalty, but the whole operating framework is such that loyalty becomes a second name for everyone. What this means is that loyalty takes on a spiritual meaning, as opposed to an attitude of “I will stick with you.” Loyalty must also work both ways. A business cannot seek the loyalty of their employees without being loyal to them.

Narayana, G. – India

“Chairman Emeritus for Excel Industries, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

My spiritual theme is: Noble actions, noble feelings, noble thoughts, noble responsibility.

Showing GOD

When I first came to Excel I showed them "GOD." What is GOD? Group plus Organisation plus Direction equals "GOD."

To build the **Group**, I did not put the system first; I put the people first. At first there were only five people in the top management group, each holding two responsibilities. We built a top team and used to meet in that room at 11 o'clock everyday and take decisions together. We discussed and talked together about all fields in the company, everything was a group decision.

To build the **Organisation**, our personnel manager became the R&D manager, our technical manager became the personnel manager, and our marketing manager became the manufacturing manager...all because we were making group decisions together.

To build **Direction**, we practiced 5-D's: discussion, decision, drive, determination, and destination. First we discussed, made decisions, initiated drive, worked with determination, and finally reached our destination. For example, the chief executive builds a team to discuss and search for opportunities, and everyone participates. Then he empowers the leaders, including himself, to make decisions, which initiates the process with resources. The chief executive then authorises the functions to provide the drive to strive for implementing the goals. He inspires the people to stretch with determination to complete the process. *Only when you stretch is there a contribution.* The organisation reaches the destination and there is success, and this elevates the team for the next situation.

Leadership is this process of participation (in a group), decision (for the organisation), and initiation (of the direction). When you have shared vision, shared mission, and shared plan, you must have shared success. Shared success is a *prasad*, a fruit. When success comes, credit must be shared and then fruit must be shared. We did all of this, like partnerships with trust and responsibility.

Management is getting work done by people, by authorising them to meet the organisational goals. Management involves attitude first, then work, then leadership, and then energy. The proper attitudes are dedication, sincerity, honesty and nobility. If you do sincere work, then management will be a dedicated management. If you are dedicated in your endeavour, then you are a loving nurturer. If it is an honest contribution, then you get empowering leaders. If you are an empowering leader, you get honest contribution.

When you are connecting with others, there are four means of connection: power, wealth, knowledge, and strength. (In Indian spiritual terms, these four qualities are related to the goddesses named *Shakthi*, *Lakshmi*, *Saraswathi*, and *Parvathi*.) Then there are three types of consciousness: *creation*, *continuation*, and *conclusion*. (In Indian spiritual terms, these three qualities are related to the gods we call Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwar.)

Creation comes from *knowledge*, continuation comes from *strength*, and conclusion comes from *wealth*. If you have money, but no knowledge, then connect and gain knowledge. If you have knowledge, but no strength, then connect and gain strength. Thus, the *power* is found in connection; so connection power is super power. The moment you connect the ego is lost.

All of these models come from GOD – Group, Organisation and Direction. This is what we did in Excel – we built this group process; everywhere I went I did this group process. As a leader, I must set the example. I must run myself before I can make others run. First must come leadership by example: intend and achieve, plan and achieve. If you have a plan, then you will achieve because your intention will go. It's a great learning process and provides challenges; when they do it, then they celebrate.

I spoke about this at the Baroda Management Association and after that people from other organisations began to write to me and asked me to come and implement GOD (Group, Organisation and Direction) for them too.

Sinclair, James E. – USA

“Chairman and CEO of Tan Range Exploration, Ltd. in the USA and Tanzania”

Spiritual Theme

My theme for spirituality would be “Live it.”

Quietude and introspection

At one time I had a desire to understand why two people with the same opportunity and background didn't have similar results, and how this happens. I also wanted to know what it was in people that differentiated individuals throughout history. When I looked deeper into this, I found only one thing in common among the more successful people: introspection.

What is introspection? It is quietude. What the young men at the Sathya Sai University in India want, what I want, and what you want, is to be a conduit of sorts for this Divine essence to materialise in whatever form it chooses to be. Maybe we can do this by getting out of its way, and striving gets in the way.

Rather than saying, “If you do the following, the following will happen...” (because that will detract, rather than attract) you have to go and look to see what it was in those that have actually been successful and find that modicum of what you will now expand on. You're going to find, I believe (because I found it in every great individual), this personal constructive period of silence. Also, it was easy to understand who they were, and they had a well-defined personal or corporate goal.

So in my organisation, everyday we start here with meditation, right in this office. Previously, I had an office with hundreds of people and even then we started exactly the same way. I tell them, “Take your time and be quiet; begin all activity in silence. Before or after lunch, however you do it, be silent. And before you leave the office at the end of the day, be silent.” I've done this with hundreds of people, but I've never told them how to do it. Why? Because I don't know how to it; it does me.

The theory is that any activity done in silence will naturally slow down thought and will open the individual to that which is true spirituality. Everything else is preparation. I think silence speaks to silence; I don't know why. People worry too much about how they're going to act in the corporation and not enough about their “being” in the corporation. So I remind them, “It is not your job to get anywhere. It is your job to be here. If you can quiet yourself in the moment of any problem or shock, then you will be able to sit back for a moment and practice what this is all about.”

There is no key to how to foster this in others. You can't give anyone a definitive way to open their channel, except the following: stop trying. And by stop trying, I mean to quiet your mind. Quiet does something; silence is powerful.

When you live spirituality, the quietude will start and there will be a time when there will be a perception of a monolithic block of silence that sits somewhere above your shoulder and all of a sudden you will start to get a feeling of "who am I?" in the sense of "what is it that tells me I am?" And the answer will come in the perception of a sound. It is that silence that is the capsulation, if there is any, of all the miracles, and all the powers, and all the creation, and all of the change that ever existed in the world.

If you have the good fortune of finding your way to Sathya Sai Baba, a universal spiritual teacher in southern India, you will have these moments of quiet; he gives you everything you need. There's nothing left out and there's nobody who can avoid this happening once you open yourself up. Why? Because you cease trying to stop something wonderful from happening. But then the needs of humanity, the need to save the world and do wonderful things, and to be noted for having done that, tends to find its way in. I believe that as long as we have a human body, we will never be free of greed.

Vrethammar, Magnus – Sweden

"Former President for Europe of Pergo Flooring in the UK"

"President of an executive coaching and business development firm Creability AB in Sweden"

Spiritual Theme

Spirituality is an opening process. And then the question is, "What are you opening up to?" I would say love, as long as I am very careful in how I define love. Love can be, on an energy level, a very encompassing and still impersonal energy. So, if one considers this type of love, I would say that my theme is "opening up to love."

Explicit and implicit spirituality in the organisation

I used to be more explicit in how I led by my spirituality. I did that through company values and mission statements and through education and development programmes. However, looking back, I gradually became more implicit: less programme-oriented and more doing-oriented. This is how I lead now.

I now definitely believe that the explicit and outward motive for house-holding an operation is simply house-holding an operation, nothing else. It is economics. To me, this makes life very simple and what you have to do as a spiritual-based leader is very clear too. You don't fire 'spirits,' you fire 'employees.' Your personal quest is also clear: it is house-holding.

Now the implicit part is: "How do I live my life while doing this? How does this way of living affect my professional situation and the organisation?"

As an example, Pergo was the most implicitly value-oriented company I managed. At Pergo, I was faced with a severe decline in turnover. We were compelled to reduce the workforce by 30%. Circumstances were such that Pergo had not put out new products and had not changed technology for the last five to eight years. So the first thing that I did was to convince the board of the strategy of

how to change the whole thing. I came with plans for a wave of new investments and provided a lot of positive thinking. Then, in the next meeting I had to announce that there must be a reduction in workforce by 30% in order for the rest to survive. First the strategy came, then came the tough news.

In order to not have a bad conscience in all of this, I believe you can only be honest. But in this case, I didn't really know the magnitude of the changes that were required. People don't always remember what you said. If you are sharing both good news and bad news, they don't necessarily listen to the negative things that were said, so I had to remind the board of these things too. I did talk about the hardships that were coming and that some people would have to go, but they didn't hear these types of statements. If I had been explicit about spirituality prior to this I would have been looked upon as a 'smiling Boston strangler.' Nobody would have believed me, and I feel that credibility is important.

If I turn this around and say that the spiritual part is the explicit and the house-holding is the implicit, I know that I am killing the spirituality. Let me tell you why. The minute I put spirituality as the explicit part, people will look at me as an organisational priest and they will focus on the deviation of what I do as compared to the "textbook," rather than looking at my good deeds as a business leader. This will kill spirituality. This will crystallise spirituality and make it a religion. Then you will have to start defending spirituality.

After many hours of thoughts on this, I have to say that my conclusion is that the explicit part of business is the house-holding operation. But this can be done by good people, and the implicit part of business is to support their spiritual quest in opening up. While I now take a more cynical approach to having explicit rules, to having explicit systems of values-based leadership and to auditing corporate responsibility – since my experience tells me these will crystallise the values and will have a diminishing potential – they are better than other kinds of rules. And while people do not become spiritual because of these types of rules, since spirituality is not rules, on the whole, it may be better to have such rules than not to have them.

For example, the most explicitly values-oriented organisation I managed was Finess. At Finess we had a lot of written policies and we also explained the policies and their relationship to the golden rule and other things like that. This helps people to reflect on things like "me and them," "me and my work" and so on. It was very interesting that when the company was sold, all of this *apparently* went out the window. Later when I came back to work with them as a consultant, I wanted to see if any of it had been left. To my surprise, a lot of these values stayed within the individuals, more than I could have expected. They *internalised* these values and now relate to this as a successful part of their life.

Webb, Janiece – USA

"Former Senior Vice President with Motorola Corporation in the USA"

Spiritual Theme

I think my spiritual theme would be "God in everyone."

Current style of leading

When I first took this position as senior vice president of technology, they gave me this office; it used to be the office of the current president of the corporation, so it has a history to it. Because there are so many new players here now, sometimes being an old-timer with a 30-year history is not a good thing. Some people even think that if you've been here more than 2 years it's not good. Also, because

I worked for the former president for 10 years, people think that I have special privileges, which is just not true.

In truth, I believe that a position of power is a position of serving the people around you. I feel it is my job to serve people. No one gets anywhere by themselves. To me relationships are very much like making deposits into accounts. I cannot be constantly taking out from the account; I must continually make deposits. I must give energy to people and not be draining their energy all the time. I am only powerful when my energy is connected with other people's energy and we do things as a team. While there are some sages who are powerful in and of themselves, I have not earned that level yet.

I have found that it's okay to admit that you are spiritual and have certain beliefs at work. However, it's important not to try to get someone else to believe the way you do. When I know that someone can handle the subject of spirituality, I talk and discuss it openly. When I know someone cannot handle it, then I just "be" my spirituality and I don't talk about it openly. I can be it, I can show it, and I can exhibit it in my behaviour and attitudes, and I don't have to label it.

I am aware of the fact that sometimes my level of joyfulness can bother people. Sometimes they get angry and attack me in unfair ways. So for the longest time I hid my inner joy and shied away from sharing it here at work. But now I am not afraid to share who I am and let it shine through.

I am only as good as the people around me. I can only achieve our organizational goals by nurturing the people. I encourage people to really believe in themselves and not let the system dictate who they are. I also encourage them to forget about the corporate hierarchy structure. I don't identify myself with my title; that's a label that someone decided to put on me, and I ask them to not let that get in the way.

Sometimes I lead them and sometimes they lead me, I have to be willing to let them do that too. Yes there are times when a command and control style is necessary in a crisis, but for me it must be needed and it must be short lived.

What I have done is make sure that I communicate in every meeting that anyone can speak up and say whatever they need to say to me. I tell them that I am just as fallible as they are and that I don't have any more grand ideas than they do. I feel that I am here to learn from them because they know much more about what we're doing than I do, and I tell them that. I encourage them to enlighten me if I say dumb things. I remind them that we are all trying to solve this problem together.

4. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAMMES (3 STORIES)

Behner, John R. – El Salvador

“Former Country Manager for Nabisco in El Salvador”

Spiritual Theme

“Realising God by serving others.”

Only saying “serving everyone” does not include that, which is the most important to me, which is to realise my oneness with God.

Standing firm for having the best

After I met my spiritual teacher, Sathya Sai Baba, I started looking more closely at the products we were dealing with. Nabisco had a big plant in Ecuador where all the subsidiary companies like ours would buy the raw gelatine for their factories. The gelatine was made out of the skins of animals. I started experimenting with a vegetarian gelatine from a company called Kelko, and found out that if we used this instead of the animal gelatine, it would not form mould in the refrigerator after two or three days. To me, that was enough reason to stop buying gelatine from our company’s plant, and instead buy it from Kelko. It did not cause good feelings in our company, but they never said, “You have to buy from our company,” because I gave them the reason for doing what I did.

The same thing happened with yeast. I found instant yeast in Mexico, which was cheaper, better and faster than the yeast from our company. Yeast was big business. Nabisco had a multimillion-dollar plant in Brazil where everybody in the company bought their yeast, but I bought from Mexico. I was told to buy from our plant, and said, “OK, give me the same price, the same conditions that I am getting in Mexico, and get your product up to standard, and I’ll buy from you.” But they never could, and I never did. I was firm in trying to get the best products for the people, but it didn’t make me too popular with the top part of the company.

Moitra, Deependra – India

“Formerly the youngest General Manager within Lucent Technologies, who at the time had 70,000 employees worldwide”

“Associate Vice President with Infosys Technologies, Ltd. in India”

Spiritual Theme

“Living with a purpose” would be my theme. True fulfilment is then the outcome of this journey.

Implementing quality programmes

I have been responsible for the total quality programmes in both my current company and in the company I last worked for. Typically, this is all about change, and it is usually dictated from the top down. The orders are usually handed down from the top without really explaining the purpose and context for why it is they are wanting this change.

I think I have been very successful in running quality programmes, not in terms of merely achieving certifications, but also making sure there are results that impact the bottom line of the business. There are two things that I realised in all of this. I feel that most people who have to implement these quality programmes are not clear about their purpose or how the programmes help the business. The new graduates are hired and they want to lay their hands on writing software code. They do not have a real appreciation for what these quality programmes are all about and why are they needed.

I have found a way to address this. I use a principle called TCP-IP. TCP-IP is something that any electrical, electronics or computer science engineer can easily relate to. It is a protocol that is used in communications networks. So I knew that anyone who came from this background would immediately get interested because it sounds like a technology to them. In terms of a quality programme, to me it stands for “Technology, Customer, Process, Information and People.”

So one way that I have really helped them understand what these quality programmes are all about is to use this TCP-IP concept. It really helps to give them a purpose and create that missionary zeal in them. I tell them:

The ‘T’ is for technology. You are getting into the technology world and of course it is important for your success to understand technology, to develop new technology, and to continue to acquire new skills and knowledge. But this technology is no good if you don’t have ‘C’ – customers who will pay for the technology, or customers who are happy with the technology. So having a grasp of technology itself is important, but it is not sufficient in and of itself. You must understand what your customer wants and why they want it. Then you package your technology to do this. In order to understand what your customer wants and how to best give your customer what he wants, then comes the ‘P,’ the process.

So I help them understand the role of process in this whole chain of technology and customers. I help them understand the need for processes and how they play a meaningful role in translating your technological products into customer delight.

With respect to information and people, you have to realise that the high technology workforce is not like factory workers who easily follow your instructions. They are highly educated people and that is why we must take a different approach to all of this. It’s the distinction between a labour-intensive economy and an information-and-knowledge-intensive economy. Here, nothing will work by force. You have to influence people by creating a cause, by creating a mission, and helping them to identify their position in the whole process and how they can contribute. I help them to realise how all of this will contribute to their own growth first, before we talk about the growth of the organisation.

In terms of my senior management, I have had to take a different approach. I have had to help them identify the context, or the purpose, for why they want these quality initiatives. I am very frank and honest with my superiors, but not at the cost of their dignity. Within certain boundaries, I do not hesitate to confront them if it is needed. So, in terms of these quality programmes, I have had to confront some of my most senior managers and ask them these types of questions: “Do you know what you are getting into? Do you want a set of certificates to hang on your wall, or do you really want it to translate into business results?” I have even told them that if they were just looking to get some certificates to hang on the wall, that I was not interested in getting involved.

While I saw that senior management was committed to this quality process, I felt they were reluctant to get involved. There is a difference between commitment and involvement. So I told them that I wanted their involvement and that would come only when our context was very clear and our goals in that specific context were clear. So it was both a negotiation and education process with my

management. And at the same time, I was helping everyone to identify the cause, the context, and make sure that all of our actions were aligned with that context.

I have led brainstorming exercises that helped the senior management identify the reasons for why they wanted to do these quality programmes and have these quality certificates. My fundamental focus there was to help them identify the context of what they wanted the quality team to do, so that we could make sure that we did everything within that specific context and not just in a mechanical manner.

At the workforce level, I also needed to show them what benefits they would get from this process and then link it to the benefits that the organisation would gain. Focus and purpose were very much present here – and that's how it links to my way of defining spirituality as an approach to fulfilment.

As a result of all of this, when we engaged in a quality programme to be certified as a Bell Labs, we were able to become certified in just one year's time, which is the only time this has happened in the history of Lucent Technologies. We not only received this quality certification, we also got a few other quality certifications in the same timeframe.

Raman, Ananth – USA

“Chairman of Graphtex, Inc. a manufacturing company in the USA”

Spiritual Theme

“Awareness” and “Realising Divinity”

Unity of thought, word, and action

There was a time when we were introducing ISO 9000, which was a system of quality control measures for our company. One of our companies was a job shop where we do specialty items for our customers. Since these products are made for specific applications it is extremely difficult to standardise things and is a very complicated process. This made it a difficult environment to introduce these types of quality measures, since it involves a lot of rigid procedures.

The expert said, “This is all very simple. All you need to do is write down each of the procedures that you are already doing. You don't have to make any improvement; you don't have to say anything else except exactly the way you are doing it. This has nothing to do with right or wrong, you simply say what you are doing and do what you say.” Even after he said all of this my fellows were still completely worried.

One evening I was thinking about this while attending a study circle with my spiritual group. I saw that all of this was simply talking about unity of thought, word, and action. So, I called in my employees and gave them a talk about unity of thought, word and action. I told them, “This is nothing but the concept of having what you feel, what you write and how you act be the same. This is all that ISO 9000 is about.”

So we went all over the company and said, “The company's objective with ISO 9000 is to have unity of thought, word and action.” If I had used the word spiritual to describe the basis of this concept, I would have probably gotten some negative reaction. To me I didn't feel that I needed to tout this as

spiritual. It was just truth and honesty, that's all. When I explained what unity of word, thought and action meant, they understood the concept very easily.

Sometimes they would even come back with an example such as this: "If a customer wants us to deliver a product the next day and we know it is going to take one week, usually we tell them it will be the day after tomorrow so we can buy some time. Can we do that? If we do, then it disturbs the unity of thought, word and action. So, what do we tell them? Do we tell them the truth?"

They started raising all of these questions throughout the departments; I was amazed at the chain reaction that began. So I told them, "Let's not go mad about this unity of thought, word and action. Let's have a monthly meeting where we can discuss these problems where you find it difficult to be totally truthful." I tried to help them see the difference between telling a customer, "no, it won't go tomorrow, we are having difficulties," which is the truth, versus "it will go day after tomorrow," which is a lie. In this way they could still buy some time without promising something which was not going to happen. We continue to have these monthly meetings where we examine these difficult situations and look to see how we can solve them with a unity of thought, word and action.