

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP IN BUSINESS

Rashmi Billus¹

Abstract

Today the leaders face constant changes in the business environment and these changes have forced the companies to seek and develop leaders who have the ability to influence people different from themselves in numerous, compound ways. Research has shown that there is a clear consistency between spiritual values and practices, and leadership effectiveness and that values that have long been considered spiritual ideals, such as integrity, honesty and humility have a positive influence on leadership success.

Keywords: Leader, leadership, Spiritual Leadership

INTRODUCTION

Along with growing uncertainty and new challenges facing organizations in dynamic environments (Tyssen et al. 2014), an enormous number of enterprise managers focus on creating a clear organizational vision, forming favorable organizational cultures, and inspiring employees inner motivation to increase the competitive advantage of organization (Chen and Li, 2013; Chen et al, 2013).

Today the leaders face constant changes in the business environment and these changes have forced the companies to seek and develop leaders who have the ability to influence people different from themselves in numerous, compound ways.

Feature articles from news week, time, fortune and business week have chronicled the growing presence of spirituality in corporate America. For our purposes “spirituality” is concerned with qualities of the human spirit and that intangible reality at the core of personality, the animating life principle or life breath that which alerts us to look for the deepest dimension of human experience.

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Sanatan Dharma College, Ambala Cantt



Source: Louis W. (Jody) Fry, PhD and Eleftheria Egel, PhD

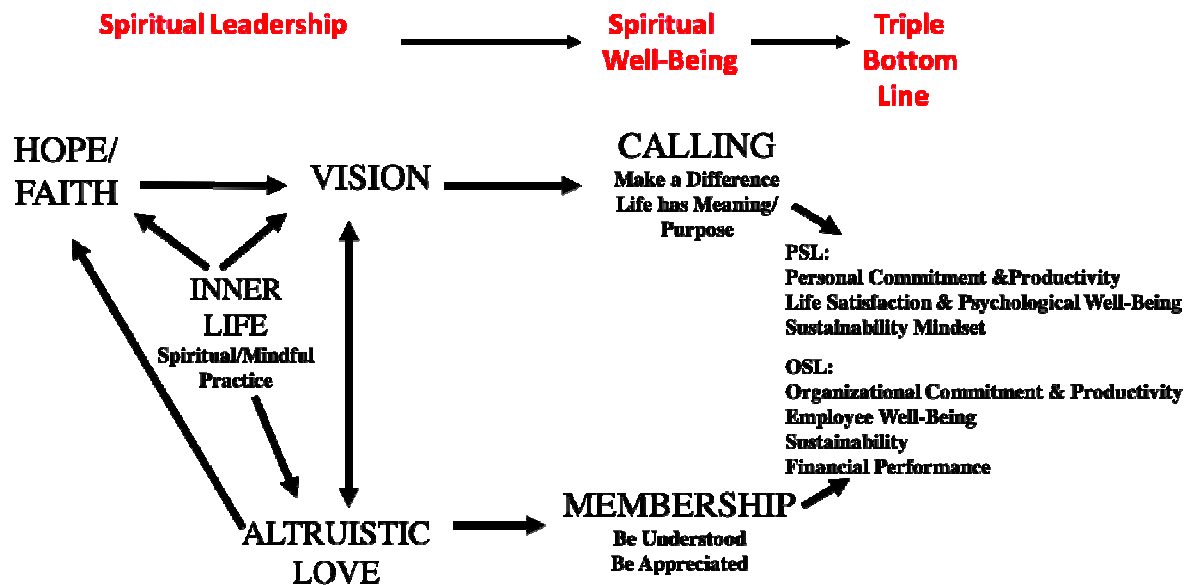
Research has shown that there is a clear consistency between spiritual values and practices, and leadership effectiveness and that values that have long been considered spiritual ideals, such as integrity, honesty and humility have a positive influence on leadership success.

An example of Spiritual Leadership Business Model in Action

Unilever: Paul Poleman, CEO of Unilever, an Anglo-Dutch company with 176,000 employees, 76,000 suppliers in 190 countries and 300 factories worldwide. Unilever offers more than 400 brands. At Unilever, environmental risks and poverty are the major problems for almost every part of business operations from manufacturing laundry detergent to growing tea. Fundamental to Poleman's leadership philosophy is his view that the real purpose of business is to come up with solutions that are relevant to society and help make society better. He also believes that customers will abandon companies that fail to grasp that while business that embrace the triple bottom line will inevitably become more profitable.

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP AND TASK PERFORMANCE

Task performance involves a specific pattern of behaviors that orient toward completing a work task and make a unique contribution to supervisor judgment of an employee's overall worth to the organization (Motowidlo and Van Scotter, 1992; Conway, 1999; Johnson, 2001)



Source: Louis W. (Jody) Fry, PhD and Eleftheria Egel, PhD

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION BEHAVIORS

Innovation behaviors refer to the intentional creation, introduction and application of new ideas within a work role, group or organization (De Jong and Den Hartong, 2010). Drawing from spiritual; leadership theory, spiritual leadership develops a compelling vision that articulate the road to fulfilling followers' ideas in the workplace since providing a shared vision is believed to inspire innovation behaviors. (Weng et al., 2015)

PRAYER AND MEDITATION AT WORKPLACE

Many people use prayer at work for several reasons: for guidance in decision-making, to prepare for difficult situations, when they are going through a tough time, or to give thanks for something good.

-Timberland Shoes CEO Jeffrey B. Swartz uses his prayer book and religious beliefs to guide business decisions and company policy, often consulting his rabbi. Kris Kalra, CEO of BioGenex uses the Hindu holy text, The Bhagavad Gita, to steer his business out of trouble.

- The ABC Evening News reported that The American Stock Exchange has a Torah study group; Boeing has Christian, Jewish and Muslim prayer groups; Microsoft has an on-line prayer service. There is a “Lunch and Learn” Torah class in the banking firm of Sutro and Company in Woodland Hills. Wheat International Communications in Reston, Virginia has morning prayers open to all employees, but not required. Spiritual study groups at noon are sometimes called “Higher Power Lunches”—instead of the usual “power lunches.”
- In addition to prayer and study groups, other spiritual practices at companies include meditation; cantering exercises such as deep breathing to reduce stress; visioning exercises; building shared values; active, deep listening; making action and intention congruent; and using intuition and inner guidance in decision-making. According to a study at Harvard Business School published in The Harvard Business Review, business owners credit 80% of their success to acting on their spiritual intuition.
- Meditation classes are now held at many major corporations, such as Medtronic, Apple, Google, Yahoo, McKinsey, Hughes Aircraft, IBM, Hughes Aircraft, Cisco, Raytheon.
- Apple Computer’s offices in California have a meditation room and employees are actually given a half hour a day on company time to meditate or pray, as they find it improves productivity and creativity.
- Avaya, a global communications firm that is a spirituality-off of Lucent/AT& T, has a room set aside for prayer and meditation that is especially appreciated by Muslims, as they must pray five times a day.
- Prentice-Hall publishing company created a meditation room at their headquarters which they call the “Quiet Room, where employees can sit quietly and take a mental retreat when they feel too much stress on the job. Sounds True in Colorado, which produces audio and video tapes, has a meditation room, meditation classes and begins meetings with a moment of silence..Greystone Bakery in upstate New York has a period of meditative silence before meetings begin so people can get in touch with their inner state and focus on the issues to be discussed.
- Lotus founder and CEO Mitch Kapor practices Transcendental Meditation and named his company after a word for enlightenment. A research project by Prof. Richard Davidson at the University of

Wisconsin at Pomega, a biotechnology company that had a very high-stress workplace, found a mindfulness meditation training produced astonishing results in reducing stress and generating positive feelings.

- Paula Madison at WNBC TV in New York City prays before each show and says she became the number one news show in the area when she increased coverage of spiritual stories.
- Apparel manufacturer Patagonia provides yoga classes for employees on their breaks, as does Avaya telecommunications. A Spiritual Unfoldment Society has been meeting regularly at The World Bank for years, with lectures on topics such as meditation and reincarnation.
- The CEO of Rockport Shoes, Angel Martinez, talks openly of the spiritual mission of his company and encourages employees to spend work time envisioning ways to express their deepest selves in their work. Companies such as Evian spring water have successfully used spirituality in their advertising, as for example: “Your body is the temple of your spirit.”
- The Service-Master Company, with six million customers world-wide, provides cleaning, maintenance, lawn care and food services, and puts its spiritual values upfront in its annual report. It begins with a biblical quote, “Each of us should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”
- Corporations are increasingly hiring chaplains to support their employees, as they are good listeners and quick responders in crises, and can serve people of any (or no) faith. (A chaplain is a member of the Christian clergy who does religious work)Tyson’s Foods, for example, has 127- part-time chaplains in 76 sites, and Coca-Cola Bottling has 25 chaplains serving employees at 58 sites. Fast food companies such as Taco Bell and Pizza Hut hire chaplains from many faiths to minister to employees with problems, and credit them with reducing turnover rates by one half.
- Marketplace Ministries, based in Dallas, TX serves 268 firms in 35 states. Fellowship of Companies for Christ International based in Atlanta has 1500 member companies around the world. They promote “The importance and practice of prayer in company decisions; a commitment to excellence; following Jesus’ example of focusing on people, not things.

SPIRITUAL ORGANISATION: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Over the years, a great number of spiritual organisations have gained importance in business by providing standard and customised workshops and courses, some free and some on payment basis to make its executives and employees learn the techniques to deal with stress, be happier at work place and improve mutual understanding, and thereby reach the organisation goals. The key features of such workshops in general are as under:

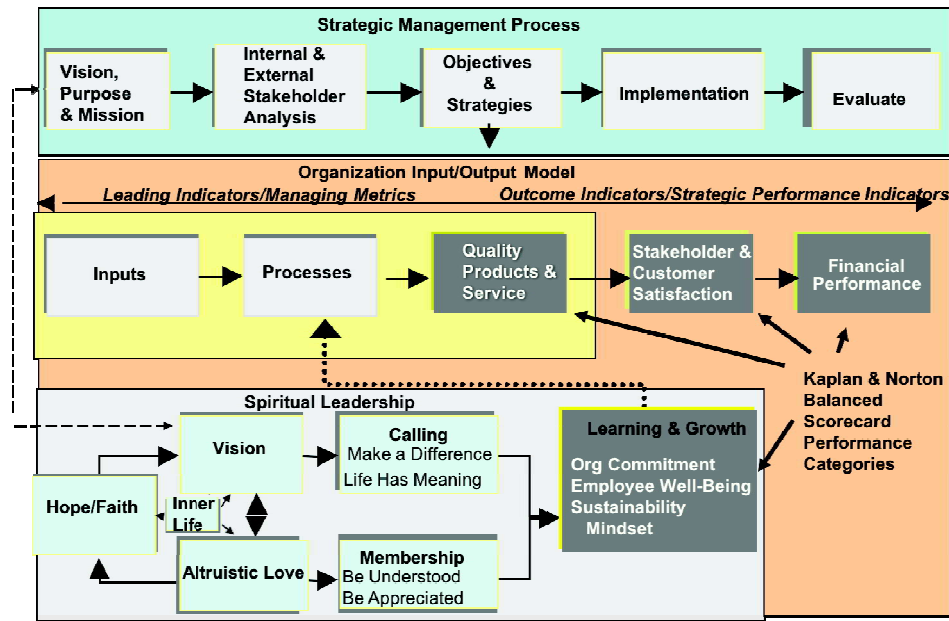
- Teaching yoga and meditation
- Playing games and role plays
- Teaching breathing techniques
- Interactions with spiritual gurus
- Planning right diets and creating good food habits
- Teaching principles to live life happily

Some of the famous spiritual organisations offering such corporate courses are

- Art of living
- Isha foundation
- Brahmkumaris
- Great white brotherhood
- Vipassana

The responses of involvement of such organisations in business for the purpose of teaching spiritual techniques for happier and stress free lives has really gained great success. Many people consider it to be the simplest way of becoming spiritual to get associated with some spiritual organisation and follow their methods and practices. A number of researches have taken place to study the impact factor of the corporate courses on the employees of business. The results of such studies are mostly positive and end

up in recommending the adoption of corporate workshops as most effective ways of launching spiritual values in organisations.



Source: Louis W. (Jody) Fry, PhD and EleftheriaEgel, PhD

CONCLUSION

So it is quite clear that it is the faith and positivity that is the main fundamental principle of being spiritual. The sustainable business, social investment and spirituality in business movements are one of the hopeful signs that business, as the most powerful institution in world today, may be transforming from within.

What is emerging is a new attitude towards the workplace as a place to fulfil one's deeper purpose with faith, commitment and positivity. As World Business Academy cofounder Willis Harman remarked many years ago, "The dominant institution in any society needs to take responsibility for the whole, as the church did in the days of the Holy Roman Empire."

Each day, more and more businesses are helping to create a better world by being more socially responsible in how they treat people and the environment. But the question asked in the beginning still remains..." whether spirituality is only an instrument for effective and efficient goal achievement or is it

becoming an end in itself converting profit making as merely means to achieve the self-actualisation.” Having known the presence of spiritual organisations becoming business centres as mentioned above, the answer is left for the reader to be found.

REFERENCES

- <https://www.successconsciousness.com/blog/spirituality/what-is-spirituality-meaning-and-definition/>
- <https://metiza.com/self-love/spirituality-vs-religion/>
- <https://scottjeffrey.com/spiritual-awakening-signs/>
- <https://www.mybusiness.com.au/management/4223-how-stress-affects-businesses>
- <http://mylifebook.com/blog/10-life-changing-spiritual-practices/>
- <https://www.businesstoday.in/lifestyle/off-track/indians-suffer-from-stress-depression/story/280119.html>
- <https://www.cardiovascularbusiness.com/topics/lipids-metabolic/work-stress-causes-68-more-premature-deaths-men-cardiometabolic-disease>
- <https://yourstory.com/weekender/how-stress-is-killing-india>
- <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/vg-siddharthas-death-here-are-other-millionaires-who-had-a-tragic-end-4268331-2.html>
- <https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/ccd-owner-vg-siddhartha-death-mental-health-suicide-india-5871624/>
- <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/work-related-stress>
- <http://www.visionarylead.org/spirituality-in-business.html>
- <https://www.spiritual-short-stories.com/spiritual-short-story-944-cashing-in-your-500000-check/>
- <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/education/iims-go-big-on-offbeat-courses-to-build-leadership-skills-cut-stress/articleshow/63371313.cms?from=mdr>