

## The Human Spirit at Work: pt.4: the life and death of a mission or cause

One of the difficulties in speaking about *spirituality* in the workplace is that each of us has a pre-defined framework (a set of thoughts, assumptions, opinions, attitudes, judgments, etc. that we work from) and this can prevent us from a discussion and reflection of it from a fresh perspective. Of course, this is true for anything we read, and particularly true if we hold the framework tightly and therefore innocently agree or disagree with the articulation or commentary without noticing we **already have our position**. You might say, the framework conspires against our capacity to see a new position or idea.

Boy! Don't we all experience this at one time or another? But acknowledging this phenomenon provides an opportunity to move, beyond the trap of being stuck to being unstuck, in our position. We free ourselves to a fresh new perspective. In short, as we discussed in the previous articles, we become conscious of the dynamics within us.

For instance, our March article explored the use of mission or vision statements in the corporate setting - statements which clearly articulate a company's purpose for existence (beyond profit); in essence seeking the answers to "Why am I here?" "Where am I going?" and "Who wants to travel with me?" This type of aspirational motivation is common (see *Built to Last* by Jim Collins & Jerry I. Porras).

In the Australian business arena, such idealism is often viewed with scepticism - an indication perhaps of a gradually shifting but still persistent Aussie culture or mindset which suggests scant regard for idealism. When we do business, we seem to prefer to get down and dirty and leave lofty sounding theories to someone else!

For Australians, the business culture tends to the practical. We are, above all else, outcome focused. Hubbard et al, in *The First XI*, summarise it well - "Just give me a good reason", "When does the job need to be finished", and "When I say it will be done it is; no matter what".

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### A Unified Spiritual Source

Many of us will have experienced the business mindset in countries like China - the culture and methodology to create business quite distinct from that of the US and Australia. That said, there is a commonality, a compelling thought behind everything we set out to do which requires an inner spirituality - an acknowledgement of **our ability to create** ideas, visions and beliefs. Moreover, this spiritual faculty works in partnership with a second spiritual ability - Consciousness (self-awareness). Together, they create the best and the worst of companies. The best of the best (irrespective of the cultural setting) must have clarity of mind, sound judgment, relevant insight, practical use of intelligence, etc. And again, this is sourced via a universal spiritual potential grounded in LIFE itself. Much has been said about entrepreneurs, and their seemingly special ability to free themselves from the limited views that hold many others back. As admired as that ability is, the ability to see 'outside the box' is simply an internal process - a freedom of mind and a diligent awareness, an openness to and consciousness of; the possibility of new opportunities.

### The Life and Death of a Vision or Cause

*"Freethinking individuals in society have always sought to change things by using the power of thought; not action. They know that thought produces action." (author unknown).*

In that quotation we clearly observe, through the author, the power of the inner world of thought, consciousness; and the resultant behavioural change. We can articulate a well-crafted vision or mission statement. We can have everyone involved and highly engaged in the process, through development, implementation and well communicated strategies.

Yet, when all is finally said and done, it comes down to how well people align their behaviour with the mission. And behaviour has everything to do with 'what I think' via attitudes, judgements, values, beliefs, etc. All of that will fuel behaviour. Exceptional businesses are of 'one mind' - a collective alignment with a living vision which is fuelled via the free will of each person to see the power of a compelling idea. The reverse is true: where force, duress or ignorance (of our powerful spiritual inner workings) is the norm; there will be to a greater or lesser degree confusion, self-interest (ego), mistrust and abuse - the net affect of which will be the death of the Vision or Cause. ■ ■