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A Human Way Of Business: Organizational Behaviors Necessary To Redefine Leadership



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We hear more and more about the new world of work, where organizations must learn to adapt to new technologies quickly and innovate or die. Leaders in this new world of work must learn about automation, artificial intelligence and the ever-growing capabilities offered by big data. Everyone in the C-suite is steering through privacy

concerns and economic uncertainty, customer expectations and shifting political winds.

While it might seem obvious that these wildly fluctuation demands require ever more human, as well as artificial, intelligence, the human side of business continues to falter even as the demands for it soar.

Global [employee engagement surveys](#) have not significantly improved—reinforcing the view that the human workforce mostly feels alone, undervalued, and unappreciated. The [Conference Board](#) reports that one out of two people are unsatisfied at work, and [many if not most people](#) feel extreme stress in their work environment. If the new world of work calls for greater empathy, creativity, and humanity these statistics beg the question: who will answer the call?

What Does it Mean to Awaken Humanity at Work?

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In order to address the most vexing challenges confronting society, we need to enhance the humanity of workplaces to the same degree that we awaken technological and financial capability. We cannot afford for this era of technological and social change to usher in great wealth for a few and greater isolation, loneliness, and fear for the many. While we are undoubtedly more interconnected than ever, the work of leaders is to transform this technological interconnectedness into truly transformative social and emotional connections.

Longitudinal research ‘Absence Management Report, CIPD, 2016’ on health and well-being shows that employees who experience emotional support at work are more than two times likely to live longer than employees who do not have an emotionally supportive workplace. More high quality human connections at work isn’t just good for people. According to research by Cameron et al. at the University of Michigan, when leaders adopt a human-centered view of business that emphasizes cultures of respect, trust, compassion, and wisdom, the performance of the organization rises along with individual well-being.

But just what does a leader who awakens humanity look like?

Imagine working in an organizational environment, where all people despite demographics, background, education or income levels can experience the feelings of inspiration, physical and psychological safety, joy and experience recognition for their true and unique contribution – not in comparison to someone else.

Now imagine being led by individuals who are connected to their unique purpose and has comfort around their own humanity.

A leader, who awakens humanity at work is one not only connected to their purpose and humanity, is able to communicate from that core motivation to stand up for everyone’s deserved dignity, right to exist, right to exercise freedom and knows to build on individual and collective values.

During our recent study with Stanford University’s CCARE, we interviewed ~42% of Fortune 500 companies who have been able to remain in the game since the year 2000.

We were pleasantly surprised to find that the levels of energy and life

satisfaction to be higher inside these organizations in comparison to their peers. We also discovered a number of behaviors, mindsets and attributes predominantly common inside these environments.

5 Behaviors for Awakening Humanity at Work

1. *Leaders sit in many chairs*

We can no longer afford to think about leadership only in terms of particular roles. We need the full humanity, creativity, empathy and contribution of each person in the organization. Leadership is no longer just power or status—awakening humanity at work requires us to awaken potential everywhere.

2. *Leaders, lead themselves*

Leadership of others that fully awakens humanity in everyone is a result of disciplined and knowledgeable self-leadership. The new world of work is also a new world of focus, self-regulation, and presence. What leaders choose not to do is often as important as what they choose to do—for instance, choosing not to blame people for errors, choosing to emphasize learning and growth, choosing to hold off email after work hours, choosing to turn off the phone and sit face-to-face for conversations. Awakening humanity at work shifts a leader's self-management as well as their management of others.

3. *Lead to win minds and hearts, but also bodies and hands*

It's a well-used phrase that leaders must win over the hearts and minds of those they hope to lead, but in the new world of work leaders must also consider that human beings are whole people with many choices over what they do and how they do it. A new model of leadership is emerging from many corners, emphasizing neuroscience-informed awareness of the

connection between people's brains and bodies. Whether leaders are conscious of it or not, the mind-body connection means that their actions have enormous impact on the physiology and psychology of those they lead. Employees' health and well-being, not to mention an organization's productivity and talent retention, hinges on leaders who understand how to awaken humanity by treating people holistically.

4. Lead for connection, not for execution

Most managers begin their careers climbing the ladder of success by getting a lot done. They implicitly develop a managerial style that emphasizes execution because tasks and accomplishments seem central to success. But the longer one is a leader, the less valuable this strategy becomes. And in a world where competitive advantage comes from empathy and creativity rather than technical prowess and execution, the best leaders are those who lead with relationships at the center of their work.

5. Leaders are purpose-driven, and they make it a priority to grow their wisdom.

It is not uncommon for us to discuss "growth" – in numbers, inside our businesses. In a world where our global workforce is stretched for its mental and emotional capabilities and the change of pace is unprecedented, it becomes critical for those in influencing roles to embrace a growth mindset to tap and unleash the power that's already within each one of us. Twenty-first century leaders who embrace their humanity not only connect to their core purpose to communicate from there, they make it a priority to grow their wisdom, becoming genuinely committed to continuously growing their competence and resilience while become invested in nurturing others.

The kind of leadership that was born in the industrial revolution, and its implicit relationship to humanity at work, is gasping for its last breaths in today's economy.

Business today needs leaders, who understand how to bind communities together, heal differences between people, and design work that enrich people's lives.

A new humanity at work is coming of age. The very best leaders are tapping into their own humanity as a source of navigation for this fundamental change because they grasp that the new world of work demands a newly human way of business. We invite more to join the journey and helping connect business to its core purpose – serving humanity.

You can read more about our research via our published [white paper](#) and take our mini-course on LinkedIn Learning [here](#).

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