

Commodity versus Humanity

For too long employees were seen as mechanical necessities, resulting in unfair, unsafe, and inhumane practices. Then in the 1960s there was a gradual shift—Instead of looking at employees as commodity, organizations began seeing them as people. With this change in perspective, Human Resources has become an innovative field for research and application, providing solutions based on clear expectations, trust, and empowerment.

Identify changes you have noticed in your career and lifetime that are examples of this shift in Human Resources.

Eight Behaviors of the World's Best Managers

"Every year, Gallup client organizations that meet the award criteria are invited to apply for the Gallup Exceptional Workplace Award."¹ A discussion with the 2019 finalists revealed these eight behaviors were exhibited in "how they lead, how they navigate change in the workplace and how they developed successful teams."²

1. Connect company purpose to individual and team action.
2. Shine a light on the opinions of others and make them count.
3. Coach your team in a way that allows for genuine candor.
4. Commit to one meaningful conversation a week with each team member.
5. Unlock human motivation by connecting work to a person's innate tendencies.
6. Recognize and reward excellence.
7. Care about your employees as real people.
8. Make your No. 1 job the development of new stars.

Which of these behaviors are part of your leadership style? Which ones do you think you need to incorporate into your leadership and management style?

Paul's Habits of Personnel Management

The book of Philemon is a case study on leadership and personnel management where Paul's actions, words, and choices are examples of the eight behaviors listed above.

Read Philemon and note the verse(s) where Paul exhibits the following traits.

1. *Paul does not use his title or his authority to coerce; instead he relies on the strength of his relationships with others.*
2. *Paul prefers having a consensus rather making an executive decision.*
3. *Paul realizes the advantage of all concerned parties to be on the same page for there to be reconciliation and a new path forward.*
4. *Paul understands the role that trust and relationships play in the work of the Church.*
5. *Paul prefers to first deal with people one-on-one rather than making the issue a corporate discussion.*
6. *Paul is willing to put himself on the line for those in whom he believes.*
7. *Paul expects the best from others because he is willing to give them his best.*

¹ Ryan Pendell, "Eight Behaviors of the World's Best Managers," Gallup, December 30, 2019, <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/272681/habits-world-best-managers.aspx> (accessed June 20, 2020).

² Ibid.

8. *Paul faces hard facts, does not make excuses, and welcomes consequences.*
9. *Paul trains his team and guarantees their work and worth.*
10. *Paul recognizes the positive qualities others and validates them.*

What other insights can you glean from the book of Philemon?

Continued Growth

When compared to the rigorous, competitive for-profit business world, the work culture in church organizations often seem laidback and low stress. As such it is one tempting to be satisfied with the status quo. Instead, we must strive to continue to grow a more mission-focused work culture where employees can see tangible ways the organization has made progress and can see how their role in it has made them better stewards.

Implement practices that validate employees and provide opportunities for them to be more integrated into the organization and the Church. Here are a few suggestions:

1. *Self-imposed goals and assessments. Employees decide their work-related goals for the year, at the end of which they do their own job performance evaluation and assessment based on the goals they had set for themselves*
2. *Paid time for service-related or mission-focused projects. For example, offer employees two hours paid time per month to volunteer in their community.*
3. *Opportunity to discover talents and interests. When feasible, allow employees to “intern” in another area of the organization in which they have an interest.*
4. *Train two levels down; Understand two levels up. Every employee trains people two levels below to do his/her job, and learns the mindset of those two levels above him/her. This nested, multifunctional model is used in well-run institutions such as the military, and provides for growth, cohesiveness, and decreased conflicts.³*

“We are all the Lord’s Onesimi”—Martin Luther

Fifty years after Paul wrote the letter to Philemon, Ignatius, a bishop wrote a letter to the church in Ephesus praising their leader Onesimus.⁴ While there is no proof that this is the same Onesimus, what if it were? Paul’s wise management style may have played a key role in nurturing a runaway slave into being a leader of the early Christian Church.

³ James Dubik, “Your job is to develop people,” Faith and Leadership, November 7, 2011, <https://faithandleadership.com/multimedia/james-dubik-your-job-develop-people> (accessed June 18, 2020)

⁴ Apostolic Fathers (Harvard University Press), trans. Kirsopp Lake, 1:166, 175