

HOW SPIRITUALITY IN MANAGEMENT WORKS TO RECONCILE HUMAN WELL BEING WITH PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITS

J.-Robert Ouimet
Holding OCB Inc.
jrouimet-ocb@qc.aira.com

It has taken mankind a few hundred thousand years, to slowly discover how to make our daily work more and more progressively efficient, productive, profitable, and also useful to the growth of the well being of the family, the community and of mankind. As stated in G & S.4-:

“Never has the human race enjoyed such an abundance of wealth, resources and economic power, and yet a huge proportion of the world’s citizens are still tormented by hunger and poverty, while countless numbers suffer from total illiteracy.”

This abundance of newly created wealth, resources and economic power, particularly since the 1990’s, is bringing out the urgency of not only to increase justice and equity. But also, because work for most humans is their main life activity, it is urgent to find *simple, spiritual, practical and actionable ways, in the work place and in the daily management of any organization*, capable to give a new beautiful spiritual meaning to work, productivity, efficiency and, if the organization functions in the free market, to profits.

And by so doing, we would begin to answer G & S. 9 - :

“Still, beneath all these demands lies a deeper and more widespread longing: persons and societies thirst for a full and free life worthy of man; one in which they can subject to their own welfare all that the modern world can offer them so abundantly. In addition, nations try harder every day to bring about a kind of universal community.”

The 35 years experimentation we are going to talk about is one of the ways to answer this thirst, for a full and free life worthy of man. It is by using - a new innovative system - in the daily management of any organization. The foundation of this new management system is - the primacy of the human dignity of each person in the work place -, along with the social necessity of growing productivity and efficiency -. It does answer the following request of G. & S. 12:

“According to the almost unanimous opinion of believers and unbelievers alike, all things on earth should be related to man as their center and crown.

But, in the work place, how can we react to G. & S.13 – telling us:

“... all of human life, whether individual or collective, shows itself to be a dramatic struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness.”

In the work place of any organization, to cope with this dramatic struggle between good and evil, we need a new - Integrated System of Management Activities - *called ISMA*, capable of

bringing in the work place on a daily basis, in a climate of full freedom, profoundly needed values of humanization and spiritualization. These values are capable of battling the evil of greed, power, egocentric behavior and injustice. And the spiritualization of the work place, made possible by our new experimented ISMA, which is capable of bringing interior silence and sometimes prayer (for those interested) in the work place, is the key hope to win the battle over greed and injustice. It does answer the need of the presence of transcendence and of - God love - in the work place as recommended by G & S. 19 - :

“The root reason for human dignity lies in man’s call to communion with God.”

During the long experimentation of this new ISMA, we discovered that it is possible to give not only meaning to daily work, and to grow well being in the work place, but also to slowly discover in freedom, for those interested, ways on how to make - work a prayer, - how to pray one’s work, in communion with God, most of the time in the silence of our hearts. Yes it is possible. We are doing it in our companies.

It is our firm conviction this can be achieved, in any economic development and in the functioning of any organization, with the use of this ISMA. This innovative and unique management system can realize in daily work the following objective of G. & S.69 -.

“The fundamental finality of production is not the mere increase of products, nor profit or control but rather the service of man, and indeed of the whole man, with regard for the full range of his material needs and the demands of his intellectual, moral, spiritual and religious life.”

The ISMA is capable of realizing what Cf. Acts 4:12. is demanding:

“... economic activity is to be carried on according to its own methods and laws within the limits of moral order, so that God’s plan for mankind may be realized.”

We are convinced, that with the complete variety of humanization and spiritualization values, brought in the work place by the activities of this new ISMA, it is possible for some of us, in freedom, to pray our work, to offer our sweat and our work to God, and therefore be as suggested in G & S. 67-, every instant of our daily work can be:

“...associated with the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, Who conferred an eminent dignity on labor when at Nazareth He worked with His own hands...”

It is also possible with the ISMA, to give to every moment of our work, and to every management decision, the meaning described by Pope Jean Paul II:

“Work exists for man; and not man for work.”

So the ISMA can pursue the fundamental objective of Mater and Magistra p. 430 - :

“By its very nature private property has a social quality which is based on the law of the common destination of earthly goods.”

My role, as a privilege business leader is to share with you how Gaudiam and Spes can be lived, day in and day out in any organization.

I will share a unique 35 years new ISMA real life experimentation in my companies, described in a Ph.D. thesis of 1500 pages, and obtaining in 1997, for the public defense of the thesis at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, the mention - magna cum laude -.

1. INTRODUCTION

Our experimentation started in 1933. It accelerated after my graduation from Columbia University in 1961. The results I will share with you are based on reflection, experimentation including lots of mistakes, inquiries, and scientific research projects, carried out in the companies founded by my father, Mr. J.-René Ouimet, in 1933. These businesses are in financial management and equity investment; also we are one of the major Italian frozen food manufacturers in Canada. We are private companies. Our turnover is over 100 M \$ per year. Come and visit us in Montreal. You will see if what we are talking about today is a lie, or is true.

2. OBJECTIVE OF OUR EXPERIMENTATION

With the help of spirituality, reconcile in daily management the growth of both, the human development and well being, and the efficiency and profitability of any organization.

3. EXPERIMENTATION AND FINE TUNING

This experimentation is essentially aimed at researching and fine-tuning the various management activities of our ISMA. These activities offered in the work place, on paid time, to those who are interested, bring to the participants a cluster of humanization and spiritualization values. This balance cluster, is cumulative over the years. The values complement each other, like different vitamins do...

They gradually transform the work place. They enrich the organization's work culture. They contribute to the growth of the well being of the people who work there, and they also stimulate the organization's efficiency and profitability.

Follows is a partial list of the three categories of our experimented management activities.

Activities fostering mainly *humanization values*:

- Activity called – A Gesture –;
- after layoffs;
- dinner for four before hiring;
- community meals;

- small group meetings between the president and the personnel;
- prize of the Heart;
- wall-posters and illustrations;
- biennial research on the organizational climate.

Activities fostering a blend of humanization and spiritualization values:

- silence and sharing (sometimes prayer) at the beginning of certain meetings
- testimonial meetings
- annual, one-on-one, personal conversation

Activities fostering *spiritual values*:

- quiet rooms for reflection and meditation
- small spiritual support groups
- gestures of reconciliation

4. EXCEPTIONAL CUMULATION OF VALUES FOSTERED IN THE WORK PLACE BY THE ISMA

The research done on the cumulation of values fostered by the ISMA identifies six dominant values, brought in the work place over the years, by the variety of complementary activities.

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|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| - solidarity | - brotherhood | - listening to others |
| - human dignity | - faith | - hope |

These six values are not only complementary, but are they not absolutely essential to insure growth of human well being in the work place.

5. POSSIBLE UNIVERSAL APPLICATION OF THE ISMA

There are five conditions necessary for using the ISMA activities anywhere in the world, in any kind of company or organization (small, public, private, cooperative, governmental, or charitable). The conditions are:

- freedom
- ***aiming first*** at the well being ***and not at*** productivity and profits
- progressive implementation
- leadership

- spiritual support group.

6. CONCLUSION

The management activities of our ISMA can work hand in hand with the economic management of the organization, and with certain activities which are calling for the help of - God Love - . And as you will see, the growth of the well being in the work place will also contribute greatly, over the years, to the growth of productivity and efficiency of the organization.

The human and economic results over the last thirty five years are:

- creating good feeling of belonging in the organization;
- increasing motivation, productivity, and creativity;
- creating better communication and a climate of solidarity;
- since 1933: only one short labor strike; no lockout, not one single departmental slowdown;
- motivating each stockholders, Board of Directors member, and management to become more and more preoccupied in their daily management by the primacy of the human dignity of each and every person working in the company, and also by the fundamental importance of authenticity in any human relations;
- creating a better climate of freedom in which all participants feel increasingly at ease in expressing themselves, and in offering suggestions for improving things;
- reducing absenteeism and turn-over rate;
- slowly increasing the well being and happiness of the personnel as well as justice and fairness;
- Since 1988, achieving greater growth percentage of sales and profits, compared to the annual growth of major food processing companies in Canada (with three years of exception), along with sustained new capital investments and research and development;

In concluding, may I state with humility and objectivity, that our very unique and unusual thirty five years real life experimentation, is one of the not many available, implementable, practical and systematic and concrete answer in real life management of any organization and company, to slowly aim at satisfying the demands of G & S.72 -:

“Christians who take an active part in - the socio-economic development and fight for justice and charity should be convinced that they can make a great contribution to the prosperity of mankind and to the peace of the world... Thus their whole life, both individual and social, will be permeated with the spirit of the Beatitudes, notably with a spirit of poverty.”

By using the ISMA, we are convinced that it becomes possible as suggested in G & S – 72 for:

“Whoever in obedience to Christ seeks first the Kingdom of God, akes there from a stronger and purer Love for helping all his brethrens and for perfecting the work of justice under the inspiration of charity...” -

Yes, “it can be done.”

Yes G & S and the catholic social doctrine can be lived in ay organization, day in and day out, at certain fundamental conditions.

Yes it is “Mission possible, if it is done with Him.”

Please come and visit our companies in Montreal.

See by yourself if ...we walk the talk...or if you are liars ... and consult Internet.

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