

Boost Profits. Lower Costs.

Learn the Secret to Retaining Employees and Fostering Better Management Decisions

When you consider that half of the decisions made in American companies fail, you have to wonder, *why*? And secondary to that question is, how can a leader develop successful decision-making practices that limit failure and ultimately heighten profits?

Leadership is fraught with dangers. From the threat of losing employees to losing momentum in a cutthroat industry or economy, leaders are constantly under pressure to perform well and make decisions that stand the test of time. Is there a secret to success? Author Margaret Benefiel, thinks so, and in her book, *Soul at Work* (Seabury Books), she describes the profound role that awareness of soul, or spirituality, can play in leadership and organizational life. She writes, “Organizations, like individuals, have souls that transcend and support their practical activity. . . [T]hat soul is manifest in the quality of care in personal relationships among the organization’s staff and stakeholders. It’s not blind or divorced from bottom-line concerns but rather energizes individual and corporate activity toward those concerns.”

According to Dr. Benefiel, higher profits and lower costs come from leaders who exhibit the following characteristics:

- **Compassion and Respect.** Leaders who listen and show compassion to employees are afforded the opportunity to renew visions and goals; make better, more successful decisions; and meet the needs of both employees and customers. At times, this can entail “doing what is right” for employees and for the common good even when it is not profitable in the short term. For example, Reell Precision Manufacturing in St. Paul, Minnesota, avoided layoffs during a serious budget crunch and instead enforced salary reductions, which retained overall morale and carried the company to long-term success.
- **Capacity to empower others.** Leaders need to share power and responsibility with employees—and even extend that sense of empowerment down to actual customers. At Southwest’s University for People in Texas, a former director called the approach to empowering others a practice of “ACES”: attract, communicate, educate and support. This ultimately distributes the power downward.
- **Willingness to transform.** Leaders must understand that the spiritual journey entails practices outside and inside the workplace. For example, journaling can be a good individual spiritual practice outside the workplace, while keeping a running conversation with God at work can help one focus on the journey in the workplace and overcome daily challenges. In the end, leaders’ ability to keep their eyes on the spiritual goals often results in material rewards.

Through harnessing the creativity, passion, joy and love of the human spirit—with or without a connection to religion—employees (even the hard to employ) can thrive and businesses can succeed. Soul is, indeed, the secret to success! *Soul at Work: Spiritual Leadership in Organizations*, by Margaret Benefiel, is available in bookstores and at www.ExecutiveSoul.com

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