

The Changing Workplace: How Flexible is Your Organization?

Presented at the "International HRD Congress" organized by HRD Network at Islamabad, Pakistan from June 7-8, 2003

Study Background

By early 1995 I had been involved in the HR and change management consulting and corporate training for over seven years and had conducted hundreds of management skills training programs. Although positive feedback and the repeat work reinforced that the work was really appreciated, I was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with end results. After every training program when I sat down to evaluate the impact of training, besides having a bunch of evaluation letters filled up by the program participants rating the program from very good to excellent, I never was fully satisfied. Despite of having the best of the professional training by the best professionals and top institutions in the world, and having worked with top international professionals, I always questioned the contributions and the impact of training on the "real" bottom-line, i.e. a sustained behavioral change and its impact on the organizational performance. I shared my concerns with many professional colleagues in USA and UK, but alas, did not find any answer, besides "you are doing great, Faiez, that's how it was supposed to be."

It was the summer of 1995, when I have an opportunity to take an eight-week educational trip to USA. Besides participating in a Strategic HR Program of Harvard Business School, I had an opportunity of meeting my teachers, who initially trained me. Although they were very much impressed with my career and professional growth, they picked up my dissatisfaction and probed in to it. Quiet reluctantly, I shared with them my inner feelings and my frustration as there was no one to discuss it with. They listened to me for hours, probed in to me, asked questions and finally after about 6 hours, said something that became instrumental in influencing my whole career and life. I do not remember exact words but what they said was something like this. "Faiez, you have a point. What you want to ask is a question that is ahead of its time and we are not surprised that no one had the answer. On the other hand, we also think that you have been asking the question to wrong people. The answer to your question probably would come from philosophy, psychology or most probably from spiritual and religious sciences and you have been asking it to the management and HRD experts. How could they tell you something that they themselves don't know? Instead of living with confusion and dissatisfaction, you might want to consider the possibility of undertaking an in-depth tour into philosophy, psychology and religion, to find answers to your queries." Three weeks later when I came back to Pakistan I resigned from the board of directors of a large consulting house to undertake a journey, which no one knew where it would lead. It's been eight years since I started my journey and still I could not see the finishing line. Everyday, I am discovering new truths of life. Although I have been sharing my learning through my books and seminars regularly and using it to heal the "soul" of my client's organizations, this is the first time that I am presenting the summary of my eight years long struggle and its "findings".

The Case for Change

If globalization is perceived by many as a phenomenon putting an ever-increasing stress on organizations and reducing their chances of survival, then on the other hand, it has also proven to be a blessing in disguise for many others who took it as an opportunity of soul-searching, rediscovering the purpose of life, reestablishing their priorities and rebuilding the lost soul of their organizations. With ever-increasing cost of production, increased competition, open markets, increased wages, continuous pressures for increased quality at lesser prices, increased investment costs due to ever-changing customer's expectations and associated technology requirements, the only solution for survival is in becoming a fast-paced, highly effective and an efficient organization. There is no room left for any type of organizational fat (including fat in processes, systems, structures, policies, etc.) that would slow down the organizational capacity to react faster and better than its competition. On top of that, advancements in the field of technology and communication have tremendously improved the overall productivity and efficiency and thus the manning requirement in any industry has substantially reduced.

It has become very clear that structures, systems, processes and skills that have brought organizations to this point in the history are no longer good enough to enable organizations to cope up with the cut-throat competition and the challenges of the 21st century. Take a real-life example of Sony Corporation. In 1986 a 14" Sony color television was priced in the local market for Rs. 9,500/- and there were only one or two major competitors in the market for this prestigious Japanese brand. After fourteen years, today, Sony 14" color television in Pakistan sells for less than Rs. 9,000/- and there are at least six other major competitors in the market. The question worth pondering is that in fourteen years with an average of 7-8 percent inflation in the country with continuous devaluation of the local currency in the international market, how could the organization still survive? Are they selling it on a loss? Certainly, not. They are making profits and probably more than what they were making previously. Is this price control at the cost of quality? Certainly, not. Today, the television is several times better as compared with its 1986 model. The view screen is better, flatter, clearer and put lesser strains on eyes. Its remote control has over two hundred features as compared with only

twenty features in 1986. It comes with a “stereo” and four-speaker system as compared with “mono” and one-speaker system in 1986. Suffice it to say, that in each of the technical aspect as well as in terms of aesthetics, today it is much better. It is estimated that if today Sony Corporation was manufacturing the TV exactly with same structures, systems, processes, staffing and technology as back in 1986, a 14” television could have been priced in the local market at approximately Rs. 48,000. The same trend could be noticed in other industries including cellular phones, air-conditioning, computer, etc.

Let me share another interesting fact about the service sector. Back in 1996, using activity-based-costing (ABC) tools, I calculated that public-sector banks were spending between Rs. 1200–1600 for each personal check they were cashing. There were six people who were involved in the process of encashment of each personal check such as, cashier, peon, ledger officer, signature verifier, senior officer, and finally the manager. In addition, there were nine different activities involved in the process and end result: the process was taking an average of 25 minutes and costing the bank Rs. 1200-1600. This was an example of the banking sector. However, other industries in the service sector including telecommunication, cellular phones, electricity, gas companies, hotels, travel agencies, airline companies, be it be in public or private sector were not much different. Do you think that these companies could have survived without introducing fundamental changes in their processes and use of technology for their advantage? Certainly, not. They had to change, and many did change. Compare the figure of Rs. 1200-1600 per check, 6 people, 9 activities and 25 minutes with these statistics. Less than Rs. 100 per check, 1 person, 6 activities, and less than 5 minute processing time. These are the statistics of a foreign bank. Do you still think that the Globalization and associated pressures for change, a “blessing” or a “curse”, both for the organization as well as for its customers?

The Study

This was a case for organizations that needed drastic change. It is very obvious that performance, productivity and profitability is what every organization wants. We also understand that there are several internal and external drivers that affect organizational performance, productivity and profitability. The purpose of the study however, was not to look into each of these drivers but rather focus only on the human side of it.

Coming from my previous experience of working with multinational organizations as well as large local business houses, I was clear that there are many organizations, which have the best of the technology, global best structures, systems and processes and highly qualified and experienced people. And I noticed that their real challenge was not that their people did not know “what” needed to be done or “how” it needed to be done, but their real challenge was “how to motivate people to do what they were asked to do?” And this motivation aspect of the individual performance was the main objective of the study. To see as to what inspires a man to do what he/she chooses to do.

Let me elaborate on this. In one service-sector company I worked with, every member of the customer services team had gone through a series of three “Customer Care” workshops of three-day duration each, but according to the management, there was not much change in the attitude of their customer services team. During a visit to the customer service center disguised as a customer, what I noticed was that nicely decorated and adequately furnished reception area was littered with posters reiterating organizations’ commitment to customer service. But in terms of its people, I observed that:

- Many organizational employees passed through customers-on-wait without noticing them what to say of helping them or smiling at them,
- Customer services officers sipping hot coffee sitting on black-leather office chairs while serving customers,
- A few customer services officers were chatting with their fellow female-colleagues inquiring about the “weekend party” in the presence of customers,
- Two customer services officers talking privately on the phone (that seemed to be a personal call) while customers was on wait, and
- Finally, realizing the rush, when the manager came out in the hall, those two who were on phone hung-up their phones and others started showing their work-efficiency too.

What would you say of this organization? Does it really seem interested in its customers? Alternatively, does it really seem to know the basics of customer service? But as I mentioned earlier, all of them had participated in an extensive training program on customer service.

Many could argue that it was probably the training that was not delivered properly and hence it failed to deliver results. I have different opinion on the matter. Being a behavioral expert, I have been trained to look beyond what is obvious. On the surface, it seemed so, but the mere fact that their behavior immediately changed after the manager came out suggested that all of them were conscious of the fact that they were doing something “undesirable” or “wrong”.

Then a question arises? If they knew what was required, they why did not they do it? To answer this question, the first thing that we need to know is that performance has three dimensions. To be able to perform any task, any individual or organization needs to have three things:

1. Knowing as to what is “desirable” and what is “undesirable”. What is “right” and what is not “right”, what is required, what needs to be done, etc.,
2. Skills, meaning desired competence to be able to practice their new learning, and
3. A “want”, a “desire” and the motivation to do what is required of them.

It was clear that all of the team had the desired knowledge as well as skills to perform their jobs effectively. However what they lacked was the third dimension of it, i.e. a “want to do”. And this was reflected on their least-courteous behavior with their customers. Someone could argue that the training ignored this behavioral aspect of the customer service and had it been addressed in the training, the outcome could have been different.

Yes it could have been right. The training would have missed on this important aspect. However, what I later found was that at least in this case, it was not true. The Customer Services Manager told me that the week immediately after the program, the behavior did show some positive improvements but within few days, the old behavior started resurfacing. Later on I checked the training contents and was convinced that the behavioral element was built in the training design and the training did talk at length as to why customer is important and why he must be served well.

Now the question that I started pondering upon was, “What motivates a man to make a choice of doing or choosing not doing something when there is no external pressure on him/her and one could choose at his/her own free will?”

To find answer to this simple question, I scanned through hundreds of books on psychology and philosophy. All I discovered was extension of what I already knew that behavior is not an end in it but the result of individual’s beliefs. From individual’s beliefs, the values are formed, from values comes the attitude and the attitude leads to behavior. And no “sustained” change in behavior could be brought in **unless personal beliefs are first changed**. Well, to be honest, all of this effort did not make me any better than I already was. Again the question that was not being answered was that although the behavior changed as the training tried changing the beliefs of customer service executives about the value and importance of the customer but why that behavioral change did not sustain?

The Breakthrough

The life went on with this frustration and finally one day, while reading Qur’an; one verse literally absorbed me into it. It read:

-Verily never will God change the condition of a people until they change it themselves with their own souls..... (13: 11)

The more and more I reflected on this verse, the more and more it revealed itself. I believe that it is the beauty of the Qur’an that more one ponders over any verse, more and more revealing it becomes. Anyhow, a few of my learning from this verse relevant to the topic under discussion were:

- Behavioral outcome is the result of what people believe deep down,
- Beliefs are learnt and like any other learnt thing can be changed/replaced. Otherwise Allah would not have asked us to change something that we could not change,
- Permanent behavioral change can be achieved,
- No one can change anyone, unless one himself or herself wants to do so
- Behavior reflects physically but is not a function of body or mind but rather the function of soul, and
- Once the person wants to change his/her conditions of life, his/her behavior, his life condition would also change.

One interesting thing that I later discovered was that all the beliefs are consciously or unconsciously learnt. It means that either people make a conscious effort to choose the belief system, they would like to live by otherwise, what they would see others doing, they would unconsciously adapt those beliefs. I also later found that more than 90 percent beliefs, people live with are unconsciously adapted. Like any setback, which also brings an opportunity, I further discovered that there was a positive dimension to this finding, too. The good news was that because majority of the beliefs are unconsciously adapted, it is possible to change or replace them.

Why People Choose what they choose to do?

With my new learning in hand, I developed few hypotheses and started testing their reliability in diverse situations. Situations that I identified are listed below. I was interested in knowing how people act in these situations and what causes their chosen behavior.

- Red traffic signal
- When someone abuses
- Someone bumps into one's vehicle
- Reaching office on or before time
- Serving the customer
- Use of power and authority
- Use of official resources

It is not possible to share my observations in each of the above situations in this short paper; therefore I am sharing the observation in only the first one. The responses I gathered for each of the situation obviously, were different, however the drawn conclusions and learning for each of the situations above are same. In the first scenario, several behaviors that I observed were further classified into six (6) main areas as below:

1. A few seemed to be totally ignorant of the "red" light and continued driving.
2. A few unwillingly stopped and when they saw others continuing driving on the red light, they also ignore the red light.
3. A few stopped, looked around and when found no other traffic on the other side and found it safe to drive, they too continued at red light.
4. A few seemed more curious in finding if there was a traffic cop on the crossing. Their behavioral choice seemed to be dependent on the traffic cop.
5. A few others showed a little consideration towards the traffic on the other side, allowed them to pass through and then continued driving on the red light.
6. And yet, there were a total of seven (7) in 25 different cases and with over 400 people under observation, who stopped religiously on an empty road with no traffic-cop around at about 2'O clock in the morning and took personal pride in continuing stopping at the red traffic light, unless it turned into green. In one such case, there was an impatient driver on the tail of such a committed person and the driver on back continued honking and after having no response from the driver ahead, finally decided to reverse his vehicle back and then sped away.

Now, lets' start analyzing each of these six behavioral types:

1. It is a type, which has no regard for life, no concern for others or about their own obligations and is driven through lower-level instincts.
2. It is a type that is influenced by others and would go with the wind. For them what is in fashion is what is "right".
3. This is a type, which is more concerned about its own safety and may be the safety of others too. They might choose a negative behavior, if it is not perceived to be life-threatening to them or for others.
4. This is a type of people whose decision-choices is based on the fear of losing something. They would avoid a wrong behavior if they are afraid of being caught or being penalized or punished for their wrong-doings.
5. This is a type, which is concerned about other's rights to an extent. These people have a tendency to choose a negative-behavior as long as it will not adversely affect others.
6. And finally these are the people who are self-responsible and internally controlled. Their behavioral choices are not dependent on any other thing but on the theory of "right" and "wrong". What is "wrong" is "wrong" in their dictionary and no external event could make them do what is "wrong".

Out of all these types, I also discovered that it was only the number six type that would show the consistency in their "right" behavior. Although type number 2, 3, 4, and 5 could also choose the right behavior on instances, but remember here we are talking about sustainable and consistent change in the behavior, which is only possible in the type six people. Now, once again the question that I would like to ask is that who does not know that "red" traffic light means stop and who does not know how to stop the car. Certainly, anyone who can drive a car knows that the red traffic light means "stop" and also is capable of stopping the car. It reiterates that knowing "what needs to be done" and having skills of how it is done is not good enough, unless there is a willingness, desire and internal motivation to do it.

What type of people would you like to see in your organization or at home? Hopefully, your answer would be: "type number 6". Let's see what makes ordinary people "type six people". These are the responses of type six people when I asked them, "What motivated you to stop":

- It was wrong, unethical, unlawful
- It could have caused me damage
- I did not want to kill myself

- I did not want to kill anyone
- It is not good to violate national laws
- It is not good to cause annoyance to someone
- It was the other side's turn - right of way

Although these were the apparent responses that came out, I was sure that there was more to it deep down. Because these responses could have been good enough to justify type 2, 3, 4 and 5 behavior, but not the type 6 behavior. Simple fact:

- If it was their fear to kill someone that motivated them to stop, then there was nothing different in type 6 and type 3?
- If it was fear of damage that caused type 6 to stop, then the type 2 and type 6 behaviors could have been same, but it was not.
- If the concern was "causing annoyance to others", then type 5 and type 6 behavioral could have been the same, but it was not.
- If it was all about fear of violating traffic laws then why did they stop, when the traffic policeman was not around?

The Religion as the Driving Force

After long probing questions and discussions with these people, it seemed that finally I got the answer to my long overdue question. The answer that came out was that it was the fear of God that made the type 6 people to choose the "right" behavior .It was their belief in divine laws that caused that inner motivation to consistently choose the "right" over "wrong" without being "watch-dogged". Because it was only the religion that addressed and incorporated all the motivational forces into one comprehensive set of guidance, called the divine laws:

- It is the religion that teaches people to be considerate of others
- It is the religion that teaches people not to cause annoyance to others
- It is the religion that teaches people to obey the authority and the national laws
- It is the religion that teaches people to respect and protect one's own life
- It is the religion that teaches people to regard, protect and safeguard the life of all living creatures in the world
- It is the religion that teaches people to continue fulfilling their obligations towards others regardless of the results, and
- It is the religion that teaches people that they are responsible for their own actions and that they are being continuously monitored

It was 1996, when all of this happened and I finally got the answer. That the inner motivation of obeying organizational policies and national laws, serving customers, to be honest, to be ethical, to be creative, innovative, to come office on time, to work diligently in workplaces, to respect the authority figure, to help and support each other, to focus on building self rather than putting other's down, to learn, to grow, to change, to be self-accountable, etc. without being watch dogged, could only come from the religion.

Soon after I started sharing my new learning with others, I discovered that many people including Non-Muslims and Muslims, alike, were not comfortable with "religion". They thought religion to be very private matter and argued that even the spiritual-orientation of a person could be good enough to make him or her stop the car at the red light. They referred to type 3 and type 5 people who are spiritually-oriented people and not necessarily religiously-minded people. I agreed with them on this point but also clarified that although type 3 and type 5 people tend to choose right over wrong more frequently than other types (excluding type 6), but as earlier mentioned their behavior would not be consistent. In instances, where there was none on the street, and it was safe too, they would have chosen to continue driving after looking around. That is why that I am continuously pressing on word "consistency" and this consistency of choosing the right over wrong only comes through the practice of religion.

During this phase of the study, I discovered another very interesting phenomenon, which I would like to share here. The study of human psychology reveals that human beings' motivation of performing an act comes due to any or both of the following sources:

- Either we choose to undertake an activity because it gives us "Pleasure", or
- To avoid the "Pain" (i.e. fear of losing something important, fear of reprimand, punishment)
- Or for a combination of both

Isn't it true? Yes it is. People go to work because of two reasons. Firstly because going to work and meeting people, learning new things, making new friends, etc. is pleasing enough or secondly some may go to work because if they did not go, they might lose their job. Interestingly, this principle that was discovered somewhere in late 20th century, was mentioned in the Qur'an many times. On one hand Allah is cautioning us from the calamities of hell if we choose to do wrong deeds and side-by-side He is also inspiring us by elaborating the tranquility of heaven waiting for those who choose to do good deeds. Even the main job bestowed on the Prophet Muhammad, P.b.u.h, was to educate people about the "pain" and "pleasure" associated with various behavioral choices, as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an":

"But thee, We only sent to give glad tidings and admonition". (25: 56)

It is very strange that we believe researchers and scientists more than we believe in God. Well, any rational thinker would agree that the only person who could possibly tell A-Z of a product is the one who manufactures it. Have we ever thought that it is God who had created us? And if it is true as it is, then Who could be the One to know and tell A-Z of this world and every thing in it. Obviously, its' Creator. Why it is so difficult for people to understand this basic truth?

Excuse me for this emotional skid. All I am trying to say is that God being our Creator knew the psyche of the man. He knew this "Pain and Pleasure Principle". He knew that this man would not be motivated to do anything unless it affected him personally. That is why that with each of His commandments, He has attached both pain and pleasure. If we choose to obey his commands, we would save ourselves from pain and on the other; it would also give us some benefits, i.e. pleasure.

Take the above-mentioned example of serving the customer. If on one hand, people who serve their customers well are avoiding the risk of being caught, being complained about and reprimanded, etc., various studies have shown that service attitude fetches the following personal rewards to individuals who practice it:

- Their immune system provides better self-defence against diseases
- They are wanted and loved and it raises their self-esteem
- Are generally more relaxed, happy and at peace
- They live longer. Service attitude heals
- And their smiles reduce cholesterol and stress level, too

Can we motivate others?

I believe that by now it has become clear that the major challenge of today's organizations as well as managers is developing and retaining a highly-motivated and inspired team. But the question worth pondering is, "Can we motivate others?"

One day, I had to baby-sit an 18-months old sick child in a family when his father had to rush to pick-up his wife and another child whose car broke down while driving back home. The child's father before leaving handed over to me a small bottle of syrup with instructions to feed one teaspoon to the child when and if the child cried. After about 15 minutes, the child started crying. I grabbed the syrup bottle and in front of the child poured a little amount in the teaspoon while talking to the child. While I was pouring the syrup in the spoon, the child hit the spoon with his hand while crying louder and the syrup poured down on the bed-sheet. Interestingly after it happened, the crying became softer with the child looking at my face innocently. Considering it a child's play, I became a little cautious and refilled the teaspoon from a little distance from the child and while uttering child-like sentences brought the teaspoon close to the child's mouth while saving it from his hands. Immediately the child started shaking his face and crying louder than before and made it impossible for me to pour the teaspoon into his mouth. I thought of a trick and after bringing the teaspoon close to my face, started acting as the medicine was very tasty while making "ammm" and "chip-chip" sounds. The child was amused of this acting of mine and when finally I brought the teaspoon closer to his hands-reach, he again splashed the medicine on all over him.

Taking it as a personal challenge, I thought of being little mean with the child. I told him, "Okay if you don't like it forget about it" and started amusing the child with my funny faces and sentences as I have decided in the favor of the child. It did not work as the child was in stomach pain and soon after when he was crying aloud with his mouth open, I immediately filled up the spoon and poured the contents in to his mouth and with this victory uttered, "I am smarter than you are, my dear." Immediately the child's cries became softer, his mouth closed down, he took a deep breath and threw the whole contents of his mouth right on my face.

For days after this incidence, I continued pondering over this incident and finally days later, I learnt an important lesson, "Nobody can motivate anybody, we can only try educating people and raising their conscious level. If a child could not be motivated what to say of adults! However, if we educated people about the consequences of their actions, they would themselves choose to act in a conscious manner, because no healthy and conscious person would like to choose an act which would cost him/her more than it would give. Although this learning could not be applied to all children, but for adults, it is the only choice. Had there been an adult conscious of being the consequences of not taking the medicine, he could have chosen to take the bitter pill, himself. But if we try

to impose something on people without first educating and raising their conscious level, they would spit it over whenever there was an opportunity and probably that's exactly what happened in the case of the customer services team, above.

The point here is that people are least concerned with anything that goes on unless it affects them personally, positively or negatively and they must be educated about the consequences and rewards of their behaviors if a sustainable behavioral change is to be achieved. And notice that I am using the word "education" and not the "training" because I sincerely believe that human beings don't need to be trained but rather needs education which could build their conscious and give them answers to "why". This is an uphill task, which could never be achieved without religion as Duke of Wellington Arthur Wellesley once said:

✓ "Educate people without religion and you make them but clever devils."

And if we educated our people good enough, I can assure you that no one is fool enough to choose an action that would cost him much more than what would it give to him. And this could probably be better done by chaplains and clergy than a simple business graduate who probably knows "what" but is aloof of the consequences of these actions on one's life.

The Changing Workplaces

Although I started my journey towards finding the truth in 1995 and till 1999, I have had many breakthroughs in this struggle. But one day in early November 1999, when an admirer sent me a copy of a latest "Business Week" magazine tilted as "*Religion in the Workplace – The growing presence of spirituality in Corporate America*"¹, I could not believe in what I read. Although I have been sure of the revival of God in our daily lives, but did not know that it would be so quick. Let's see as to what that issue revealed:

- "Have you had occasion to talk about your religious faith in the workplace in the past 24 hours? 48 % American said "yes" (Results of Gallup survey)
- "Does the modern life leave you too busy to enjoy God or pray as you would like? 51% of Americans say yes." (Results of Gallup survey)
- "Do you feel the need in your life to experience spiritual growth" 78% of Americans say yes, up from 20% in 1994." (Results of Gallup survey)
- "95% of Americans say they believe in God or universal spirit...."60% of Americans say they have absolute trust in God. 79% of Americans say they believe God exists and have no doubts about it." (Results of Gallup survey)

Further more the article revealed that:

- "There are 10,000 Bible and prayer groups in the workplaces in America that meet regularly."
- "The number of books on "religion in the workplace" hitting the store shelves as quadrupled since 1990."
- "Across the country, major-league executives are meeting for prayer breakfasts and spiritual conferences."
- "In Minneapolis, 150 business chiefs lunch monthly at a private ivy-draped club to hear chief executives draw business solutions from the Bible."
- "300 Xerox Corporation employees – from senior managers to clerks – have participated in "vision quests" as part of the struggling copier company's \$ 400 million project to revolutionize product development. Alone for 24 hours with nothing more than sleeping bags and water jugs in New Mexico's desert or New York's Catskill Mountains, the workers have communed with nature, seeking inspiration and guidance about building Xerox's first digital copier-fax-printer..... The eventual results: the design and production of Xerox' hottest seller, the 265DC, a 97 %-recyclable machine. Word of the program's success spurred senior executives from companies as diverse as Ford, Nike, and Harley-Davidson to make pilgrimages to Rochester in September to get a firsthand look."
- "Companies such as Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, and subsidiaries of Wal-Mart Stores are hiring Army-style chaplains..... Members of these 24-hour God squads visit employees in hospitals, deal with nervous breakdowns, and respond to suicidal threats. They'll even say the vows on a worker's wedding day or deliver the eulogy at her funeral".
- "In Silicon Valley, a group of high-powered, high-tech Hindus including Suhas Patil, founder of Cirrus Logic, Desh Deshpande, founder of Cascade Communications, and Krishan Kalra, founder of BioGenex - are part of a movement to connect technology to spirituality."
- "Aetna International Chairman Michael S. Stephen has extolled the benefits of meditation and talked with Aetna

¹ Michelle Conlin, "Religion in the Workplace", *Business Week*, November 08, 1999

employees about using spirituality in their careers.”

- ❑ “Five years ago, there was only one conference on spirituality and the workplace (in America); now there are about 30.”
- ❑ “All over the country’ for example, a growing number of Muslims, such as Milwaukee lawyer Othman Atta, are rolling out their prayer rugs right in the office.”
- ❑ “According to the Gallup Organization – it would make sense that, along with their briefcases and laptops, people would start bringing their faith to work.”
- ❑ “One recent poll found out that American managers want a deeper sense of meaning and fulfillment on the job – even more than they want money and time off.”
- ❑ “..perhaps the largest driver of this trend is the mounting evidence that spirituality minded programs in the workplace not only sooth workers’ psyches but also deliver improved productivity.”
- ❑ “..a recently completed research project by McKinsey & Co. Australia shows that when companies engage in programs that use spiritual techniques for their employees, productivity improves and turnover is greatly reduced.”
- ❑ “The first empirical study of the issue, *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America*, published in October (1999) by Jossey-Bass, found that employees who work for organizations they consider to be spiritual are less fearful, less likely to compromise their values, and more able to throw themselves into their jobs”.
- ❑ “.....University of Southern California Marshall School of Business Professor Ian I. Mitroff (says): “Spirituality could be the ultimate competitive advantage”.
- ❑ “Shoemaker Timberlands Co.’s chief executive, Jeffrey B. Swartz,..... uses his religious beliefs to guide business decisions.....”
- ❑ “...Austaco Inc., the sixth-largest Pizza Hut and Taco Bell franchisee in the U.S. began hiring chaplains in 1992.....the company has reduced its annual turnover from 300% to 125%.”

Well, isn't it strange? Well, even for me who had been talking about religion in the workplace since long, this article came as a pleasant surprise. Although this article inspired me a lot, I became curious as to what was causing this revolution in this secular world of ours. For this matter, I undertook a detailed analysis of the changes in the geo-political and business environment of the world in the last century and its effect on the workplaces as well as the personnel function to determine if it was yet another management fad. The summary of my analysis is presented in Tables 1 to 3 under three heading, i.e.:

1. Business environment and the changing workplace
2. Changing role of HR function in the workplace
3. Changing nature and focus of training in the workplace

The study clearly shows that it makes a lot of sense as to why religion is sweeping into our lives. Probably it was destined by the Creator to be like this for the majority of people who would never have otherwise bought into the religion. As I say, that even if people and societies put their religious and other biases aside but continue their struggle of discovering truths of this world and continue practicing their new learning to become better and better, sooner or later, all will come to the same conclusions because truth can never be two. However, it was not meant to be like this for “men of understanding”. That is why that instead of leaving us helpless in this jungle, our Creator has been continuously sending prophets to save the suffering humanity from the uphill task of learning from their painful experiences. Alas, the majority opted to learn from their painful experiences, instead. Just imagine the cost in terms of lost lives and resources that this world has paid for not obeying their prophets.

Some Characteristics of Religion-driven People

“What are the characteristics of religious-driven people?” This is another important question that is asked of me many times. Although it is little tricky to answer this question, I have noticed some common characteristics in the majority of “truly” religious-driven people:

- ❑ They are fear, stress and anxiety-free as they believe that nothing is possible without the will of the God.
- ❑ They associate themselves with the work and not with the results as they believe that their job is to do the best with given resources and leave the rest to God.
- ❑ They are patient and persistent. What they believe to be right, they would continue doing it unless they have achieved it. “NO” is not there in their dictionary.
- ❑ They are willing to quit better-paid work opportunities for something that they believe in and love even at a much lesser rewards.

- They learn from their mistakes and believe that setbacks and difficulties are blessings in disguise and provide chances for personal growth.
- They are driven by their vision and values and not by financial or non-financial rewards.
- They choose to do what is “right” even if it cost them their popularity.
- They are sincere and honest to employers. Never speak a word against employer. If don’t agree any aspect of their employer’s policies, prefer changing over instead of staying and making noises.
- They are self-responsible. They can manage themselves without being managed and supervised by others. They don’t fulfill their obligations to tit-for-tat or to avoid any confrontation, but do it believing that God is watching over their shoulder.
- They are hard-workers and take their work as a sacred obligation being responsible to God.
- They are willing to take-over additional responsibilities without any additional compensation demand.
- They are self-aware. They know who they are, where they came from, why they are here, their strengths and weaknesses, etc.
- They believe in self-improvement and love opportunities for personal growth, but don’t depend solely on their organizations for chances of self-growth.
- They believe in continuous learning, growing and changing and would love to take initiatives at their own.
- They would never resist change for betterment.
- They believe in the benefits of diversity and teamwork and work very well with people from all type of religious, cultural and social backgrounds.
- They are not critical of others however consider it as their obligation to give feedback to others.
- They are spontaneous like a child and would share their feelings and views honestly.
- They are soft-spoken, simple and modest.
- They respect and treat people at all levels of the organization, equally.
- They will always be available to help their colleagues, whenever it is asked of them.
- They will never seek for favors, neither give undue favors to anyone.
- They love to do their small personal jobs themselves and think twice before asking their office-boys to get them glass of water or a cup of tea.
- They are not abusive and enjoy tremendous control over their emotions. Their positive emotions such as laughter, excitement and happiness as well as their negative emotions such as anger, disappointment, etc. both are controlled.
- They are balanced in each and every aspect of their life.

These are just a few of the characteristics that I have personally noticed, I am sure there are many others. Now the question is “Isn’t it the profile of an ideal employee?” “Isn’t it what we all want?”

Why Islam is a “wise” choice?

One issue that seems to bother many non-Muslims is that we as Muslims share many teachings with other major religions, like Christianity and Judaism, etc. If that is how it is then why to follow Islamic teachings only? My answer has been plain and simple. Although I myself believe that there are many similarities in Islam and other divine scriptures, there are three major reasons answering, “Why Islam?”

Firstly, I believe that no other religion provides such a comprehensive code of life as Islam does. Remember that unlike other religions (religion means “a set of beliefs”); Islam is called “*Deen*” in the Qur’an and the closest English meaning of Arabic word “*Deen*” is “way of life”. If it was called the way of life then it was not possible that it would miss out on guidelines in any aspect of life, be it personal, professional, organizational or social. I am not saying it out of blue. But my answer is based on my study of Bible as well as literature on Buddhism. In addition, I have had the opportunity of reviewing many Christianity-based books on management, relationship, self-help, etc. In fact, it was books by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, M. Scott Peck and Deepak Chopra, which inspired me to start authoring books on various personal and business issues providing better answers to many truths of life based on Islamic teachings.

Interestingly this concern is not limited to non-Muslims; many Muslims share it, too. Two years ago, in a one-to-one meeting with a

senior manager of a multinational company, he got furious after I shared some of my personal views regarding the workplaces of the future. He said that although he had been a punctual reader of the Holy Qur'an for years, he did not believe that it had any thing to offer in relation to the working of modern organizations. He further bulldozed me by saying, "So what you are trying to tell me is that Qur'an is a book on management and provides guidelines for things like recruitment, selection, grievance handling and promotions". On my nod, he challenged me to prove my point. I did quote him a few verses and *hadith*. However I am sure that he would never have checked on these. Unfortunately, I did not have any published work till then and I regretted it. Before saying good-bye, he cynically smiled at me and said, "Faiez Sahib, leave the religion as a personal matter, don't try to bring it in a place, where it does not belong to (he was referring to the workplace). That was the day when I committed to publish my first book on management called "30 Second Manager" providing guidelines from Islamic teachings on almost every aspect of managing an organization. With the grace of God, the book is in its second edition in a short span of two years and has proven to be a best-seller. It is unbelievable as to how Islamic teachings fit in to workplace. A few of the excerpts from the book are provided below².

Guidelines on Recruitment

- ❑ Accept the truth that it is extremely difficult and expensive to find, develop and retain good people.
 - ✓ *Indeed people are like camels; out of hundred you will hardly find a single one fit to ride. (Sahih Bukhari)*
- ❑ Make sure that you choose right people for jobs. Selection must be based on their abilities and character. 21st century organizations will not run with 20th century thinking of hiring "yes men". As a leader, your job is to hire and develop better leader than yourself.
 - ✓ *'When trusts are wasted, then wait thou for the judgment (of God to descent upon the earth).' It was asked, 'And how shall trusts be wasted?' The Prophet said, 'When affairs are committed to those who are not worthy (of them).'* (Sahih Bukhari)
- ❑ While recruiting, never compromise on knowledge. Choose the best educated people with lots of exposure and knowledge. There is no substitute for higher knowledge. Make sure that salary is comparative. Someone hired at Rs. 20,000 per month could be a waste of time and money. Someone other hired at Rs. 80,000 could deliver manifold back.
 - ✓ *Excessiveness in knowledge is better than excessiveness in the prayers. (Mishkat)*
- ❑ People are hired on the basis of their personality traits (i.e., education, family, social class, style, experience, etc.), but are fired due to character traits (dishonest, cheater, untruthful, corrupt, etc.).
 - ✓ *The strong believer is better and dearer of Allah than the weak one... (Mishkat)*
- ❑ Although knowledge is very important; don't ignore character traits. Give due consideration to character traits while hiring people. Don't limit yourself to personality traits only.
 - ✓ *Said one of the (damsels): "O my (dear) father! Engage him on wages: truly the best of men of thee to employ is the (man) who is strong and trusty"... (28: 26)*
- ❑ Remember, personality traits can be developed and/or acquired, but not the character traits.
 - ✓ *When you hear that a mountain has moved from its place believe it; but when you hear that a man's nature has changed do not believe it, for he will remain true to his inborn disposition. (Mishkat)*
- ❑ While recruiting a person for a job, besides looking for the "right" character and personality traits, make sure he or she is inspired and committed to the vision/task ahead. If the person does not seem too excited or passionate for the vision/task, there are chances that he/she would fail.
 - ✓ *Said an 'Ifrīt, of the Jinns: "I will bring it to thee before thou rise from thy council: indeed I have full strength for the purpose, and may be trusted." (27: 39)*
- ❑ While looking for a person suitable for a job, see those who seem least bothered and don't even canvass. Sometimes, the best candidate for recruitment/promotion is the one who never wants it.
 - ✓ *You will find among the best people those who have the strongest dislike of the command till they fall into it. (Mishkat)*
- ❑ Remember that the search and selection of a suitable person for a job is a sacred obligation. So make sure that you do justice with it and hire the best person.
 - ✓ *He who hires a person and knows that there is still one who is more qualified than him, has betrayed Allah and His prophet and the Muslims. (Prophet Muhammad PBUH)*
- ❑ Make sure that you discuss all the terms and conditions of the job in advance.
 - ✓ *He said: "I intend to wed one of these my daughters to thee, on condition that thou serve me for eight years; but if thou complete ten years, it will be (grace) from thee. But I intend not to place thee under a difficulty: thou wilt find me, indeed, if God wills, one of the righteous." He said: "Be that (the agreement) between me and thee: whichever of the two terms I fulfill, let there be no ill-will to me. Be God a witness to what we say." (28: 27-28)*

Well, on top of the religious references is what our management gurus have taught us. Whereas in italics right after it, is what Islam taught us 1400 years ago. The choice is ours as to what we would like to practice. It was just a sample showing how Islamic

² Faiez H. Seyal, "30 Second Manager – A Rare Collection of Global Best Management Practices"^{2nd} Revised and Updated Edition, Lahore, Pakistan, Ace Development Dimensions (2003)

teachings could be applied in recruitment and selection of personnel. Besides its application in almost every other walk of life, a few other areas of our workplaces today where Islamic teachings provide concrete and tested guidelines are:³

- ✓ Appointments and Promotions
- ✓ Remuneration
- ✓ Performance Management
- ✓ Performance Feedback
- ✓ Conflicts and Handling Grievances
- ✓ Dealings with Blue-collar Workers
- ✓ Sources of Power
- ✓ Learning and Growing
- ✓ Management Behavior and Work Habits
- ✓ Planning
- ✓ Problem Solving & Decision Making
- ✓ Procurement and Purchasing
- ✓ Managing Finances
- ✓ Managing Time
- ✓ Handling and Managing Crisis
- ✓ Managing Stress
- ✓ Organizational Communication
- ✓ Speech and the Speaker
- ✓ Listening and the Listener
- ✓ Body Language
- ✓ Letter Writing
- ✓ Diversity - The Foundation of Teamwork
- ✓ Teams-The Need
- ✓ Working in Teams
- ✓ Interpersonal Relations in Teams/Organizations
- ✓ Nurturing Trust in Teams/Organizations
- ✓ Men and Women Working Together
- ✓ Authority and Accountability
- ✓ Personal Responsibility
- ✓ Leaders and Leadership
- ✓ Followership
- ✓ Principle-centered Leadership
- ✓ The Philosophy and Need for Organizational Change
- ✓ Initiating and Managing Change
- ✓ Continuous Improvement

We must appreciate that the Qur'an is a divine book touching upon each and every aspect of life. In such a short book of 1000 pages, it was not possible to enlist and discuss everything in detail. But the guidelines are there for those who really want to seek for guidance and can read behind lines as mentioned in the Qur'an:

"Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up by them?" (47: 24)

Secondly, I believe that Islam has one big edge over all other religions. Unlike other religions where they have only the Divine book (i.e. the policy manual) (and that too is not free of adulterations), Muslims have a Qur'an (i.e. the policy manual) as well as the life and sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh), the operation manual. With this operation manual, Islamic teachings become

³ For details of how Islamic teachings relate with these areas, kindly refer to Faiez H. Seyal, "30 Second Manager" 2nd Revised and Updated Edition, (2003)

more comprehensive as there are volumes of wisdom documented in various hadith books. In addition, in this operation manual, there is no chance of adulteration as it could be easily checked against the policy manual, i.e. the Qur'an. And if there is a contradiction in any aspect of this operation manual, we know that it is the Qur'an that must be followed.

Thirdly, in following Islamic teachings, one could have a peace of mind that only "divine" truth is being followed as there has been absolutely no change in Qur'anic scriptures. Whereas, one sees many different versions of Bible and to a surprise, many things have been omitted from the New Testament by the authority of Christian scholars of high eminence. Although I have no doubt that Bible does contain word of God, I believe that it also includes word of man and therefore it is impossible to differentiate the "real" from the "fake". So for any rational thinker believing in any faith, it makes a lot of sense to practice what is at least guaranteed to be the "real".

Yes, it all sound very rational but there are many amongst us, who still would not believe despite the fact that everyday various research studies are proving the wisdom of the Islamic teachings. About this type, Qur'an itself mentions:

- Whenever there cometh down a sura, some of them say: "Which of you has had His faith increased by it?" Yea, those who believe,- their faith is increased and they do rejoice. But those in whose hearts is a disease,- it will add doubt to their doubt, and they will die in a state of Unbelief. (9: 124-125)*
- Then after him We sent (many) apostles to their peoples: they brought them Clear Signs, but they would not believe what they had already rejected beforehand. Thus do We seal the hearts of the transgressors. (10: 74)*
- Those are they whose hearts, ears, and eyes God has sealed up, and they take no heed. (16: 108)*

Some Associated Business Gains

The behavioral issue by itself is considered as one of the biggest challenges of today's organizations, and thus any effort that inspires people at the workplace in these tough times would have a direct reflection on the performance, productivity and profitability. Nevertheless, I am taking this opportunity to share a few business results that I have achieved in my client organizations as a direct result of introducing religion in my clients' organization and educating people about the consequences of their actions on their personal and professional lives. These efforts of introducing religion included conducting of various 5-14 hours seminars, follow-up sessions, personal coaching and a combination thereof. The tangible business gains are:

- 500 sales increase in four months (a service sector organization)
- 25 percent sales increase in one year (a manufacturing concern)
- Employee stress level cut down to 1/4th
- Employee turnover reduced to 1/8th
- Increase in new market identification and penetration by 90 percent
- Inter-personal conflicts reduced to 1/12th
- Communication break-down incidents decreased by 1/8th
- Dissatisfaction with company granted pay-increase reduced from 90 percent to only 5 percent
- Dissatisfaction with the company's promotion decisions decreased from 70 percent to 5 percent
- Lead time reduction of a core process to 1/6th
- Reduction in order fulfillment time from 8 hours to 20 minutes
- Five times reduction in average order shipment time
- Employee Satisfaction index increase to three times
- Customer Satisfaction index increase to 2.5 times
- Reduction in wastages by eleven times
- Per hour customer complaints handling increase from 3.25 to 11
- Effective sales call per day increased from 4 to 17
- Net reduction in per unit cost of production by 40 percent
- Employee pay-roll cost cut down by 40 percent, while productivity increased by 20 percent
- 50 percent reduction in over-time
- Sales order ratio to sales visits increased by 60 percent
- Percentage of late-comers management staff reduced to 2 % from 70 %
- Shipment cost reduction by 30 percent
- 80 percent reduction in rejects
- Travel cost claims by sales team reduced by one-half

Besides these tangible benefits, other intangible business gains as reported by various clients/employees include:

- Teamwork in general and problem solving and inter and intra-departmental assistance incidences increased
- Cynicism and undesired jokes between colleagues were eliminated

- Use of abusive language between coworkers eliminated
- General criticism and negative attitude of employees reduced to minimal
- Personal hygiene at the workplace improved many times
- General cleanliness, self-service and especially clearing-up of dining tables from used crockery and utensils after meals improved
- Use of waste-paper bins and overall cleanliness at the workplace increased
- Energy wastages reduced
- Female co-workers felt more respected, secure and appreciated
- Punctuality increased especially with respect to office meetings
- Company vehicles' drivers reported lesser wait-time during morning pick-ups
- Complains and negative remarks about colleagues in their absence eliminated
- Personal productivity increased by eliminating time wasters in organization

The Dilemma

In these challenging times, where increased bottom-line performance is a dream of every single manager, who would not like to reap these benefits? Well, it is easier said than done. The core challenge faced by myself like other professionals in other countries offering similar services is how to persuade top managers to initiate such efforts including seminars, training programs, study-groups, etc. It seems that after listening to the benefits of these efforts, any rational-thinker would be excited. The experiences however, paint a totally different picture. My personal experience suggests that the top echelon of the organization is most averse to this idea of introducing religion in organizations. The reasons could vary from person to person and organization to organization but I am enlisting a few comments by senior managers who kept the religion out of their organization for 2-3 years, and finally realized the blunder they made:

- Probably it is due to the secular education that we have received and the career-success that we have achieved as a result that has nurtured this belief that the religion has no role to play in professional life.
- I was afraid of the resistance and unpopularity that it may cause me in the organization, knowing my team's biases against religion
- I resisted it because I knew that my organization was not ready for this. The pain was not so big as to persuade people for change. When the things started boiling and getting out of hands, I was sure that it was the time to call you in.
- It is due to our own sheer ignorance as to what our religion was all about.
- It is due to our "maulvi" (i.e. clergy) who has pushed away from our religion.
- I don't remember a day in my eighteen-year long educational career in Pakistan as well as in the USA, when we spoke of God in our class. The same would be true for my managers. It is the education system that needs total renewal..... it was a conference we attended in the USA and the supporting articles we read that changed our beliefs as to what religion had to offer.
- Well, it is very simple.....All the members of my senior management team wanted their subordinates to change and they were not willing to change themselves. Your presentation made it very clear on them that they will also have to change and they were not ready for it. When their style became a hurdle in their own career growth, they realized the need for change.....
- As you rightly say Faiez that Allah is our last priority. We restructured and improved upon on every thing and talked about and practiced every new business buzzword in our organization and when finally nothing seemed to work, there was no option left for them to survive they finally called you in.....
-I don't blame my team. The whole society is so inspired by American teachings that unless something comes from America, we don't want to buy. The article of "Business Week" followed by a training program in the USA, made us aware of the value of it.....
-Well, it is due to our sheer ignorance coupled by our lack of reading habits, that we don't even know that in which direction the world is moving, unless our "masters" practice it themselves and give us okay to go for it. Our slave mentality does not let us initiate anything without seeking prior approval of our "masters". Finally, after three years, when the new Regional Head mentioned the role the spirituality and religion is playing in various organizations in our annual meeting, your words resurfaced in my head and I decided to do it.

Conclusion

Well, I am sure that for many this would have been a "bomb-blast". I know that in this material world of ours, talking about religion in open is out-of-place⁴. I can appreciate these sentiments because till 1995, that's how I was. However, I believe that as I have seen both sides of the picture, therefore I am in a better position to present a fair and balanced opinion on both choices. As one cannot comment on the food, which one has never tasted, the same way, if one has not tested it, he/she is not in the position to comment on it. My sincere request to you all in this regard is at least give it a try, just for experimentation sake. If you do not get

⁴ Despite of having many studies revealing the benefits of the religion in the workplaces, many people even in the USA are not comfortable with religion as mentioned in the above-mentioned Business Week article. The following is a quote from the same article. *"Even in an era that's more accepting of spirituality, the prospect of religion seeping into secular institutions, especially corporate ones, makes many uneasy."*

convinced, you can always choose to go back.

Just like a pigeon if we too close down our eyes and stop looking towards the cat, the cat will not go away, but tear us apart. The cat in our case is changing times. If we don't change with the changing times, the change will sweep us away. It may seem wishful thinking but it is not so. I am sure that day is not too far away when all others international standards such as quality, environment, health and safety and social accountability standards, would be incorporated and replaced with one International Religious Standards (IRS). The application and certification against IRS would become a prestigious undertaking and the certification mark on the corporate letterheads would demonstrate the organizational religious-orientation. And it is coming up sooner than most of us could imagine. Here I would like to quote one passage from the same Business Week article:

"All this may seem counterintuitive at a time of scientific and technological apotheosis. But, just as industrialization gave rise to social liberalism, the New Economy is causing a deep-seated curiosity about the nature of knowledge and life, providing a fertile environment for this new swirl of nonmaterialist ideas."

Take the case of motivation. Anyone would know that motivation is not an end but the end result of many other things. A few of the things that stimulate motivation among individuals are, respect, reward, recognition, fair and just treatment, transparency, participation in organizational affairs, having a voice, etc., and divine religion teaches and promotes each of these traits. In addition, it is only the divine religion which incorporates all the individual, communal and social aspects of the organization including quality, performance, achievement, teamwork, employment, interpersonal relationships, health and safety, environments, human, women and children rights, work ethics, ethical recruitment, placement and promotion policies, training and development, etc.

This religious-orientation of the workplaces is the first step towards the re-dawn of Islam by the end of times, which the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) has mentioned in many *hadiths*. It is to come, sooner or later in our age or may be during the next. My only reservation however is that it seems like human rights, women rights, children rights, environment, animals rights, social responsibility, work ethics, justice, social service, etc., the credit of reintroducing God in the this world too is going to go to Americans. Why not Muslims?

Sometimes, I feel that the reason that almost every good phenomenon is being introduced by Americans has a lot to do with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. America being an advanced nation is ahead of all others in climbing up through the stages of growth and finally started touching the self-actualization stage. Whereas many other nations including the Muslim world as a result of ignoring the teachings of Islam are still struggling with Physiological, Safety, Love and association and Esteem needs. And unless these are met, self-actualization can never be achieved. While Maslow considers self-actualization to be the last stage in the growth cycle, I believe that up there one comes closer to God. That is why many people after serving all their needs, when don't attain full satisfaction, start searching God. It might answer the question as to why this new swirl is also coming from the USA.

Anyhow, I would beg your leave with a food for thought. Is there no one in the whole Muslim world comprising of 56 nations and 1.4 billion people to work on the lost glory and reputation of Muslims? If yet we don't get inspired to move, then probably we are the type mentioned in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

- ✓ Many are the Jinns and men we have made for Hell: They have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle,- nay more misguided: for they are heedless (of warning). (7: 179)

Table 1: Business Environment and the Changing Workplaces at a Glance

Business Era	The Global Environment	Reaction of Nations	Business Focus within Organizations	Culture within Organizations	People Perspective	Links with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs ¹	Functional Importance within Organizations	Fortune 100 and their CEOs
1900s-1940s	Conflicts, Wars and Independence Movements	We don't need your help. We can do it ourselves.	Survival	Lack of trust and survival of the fittest	Give them limited resources and control them tightly.	Physiological Needs	Accounting and Finance	Accounting and Finance
1940s-1950s	Industrialization (increased business opportunities, increased employment, etc.)	You can help, if you want to.	Growth while focusing on ways of increasing productivity	I can do without you.	Give them the resources, however, govern and administer their behavior.	Safety Needs	Production and Engineering	Production and Engineering
1960s-1970s	Restricted international trade opportunities, Cross-boundaries joint-ventures, international investment climate, growth of multi-national business organizations, establishment of international trade and peace organizations, relaxed immigration policies allowing international migration, etc.	Let me help you with your growth.	Cross-boundaries expansion and growth	I need your help.	People will work better if they are valued, managed and trained like other organizational resources...	Love and Association Needs	Marketing	Marketing
1980s and early 90s	Information, communication and technological revolution, Fall of Berlin wall, End of communism, International Standards, European Union, etc.	We can be more effective with mutual sharing and assistance.	Increased used of technology and standardization of systems, procedures and processes for consistency in quality	We can't do it alone. We need each other.	People are emotional beings and critical for the success of any organization and their competence is the key to success in future. They must be respected, appreciated, nurtured, developed and empowered.	Esteem Needs	Technology	Operations
Late 90s and Beyond	Globalization of the world economy, Free movement of information, goods and services, etc. More inter-border alliances like European Union, More single currency markets, etc.	We are all one and have the same objective. Then let's work together for the common good.	Humanization of the organization for competitive advantage as no other competitive advantage is left with the easy availability and transfer of technology, goods and services.	We are one and can only get the best if we pooled our resources and efforts together.	People are the most precious and important capital of the organization and the motivation of people will be the only success factor in the new age and it will reflect in the balance sheet of the organization.	Self-Actualization Needs	Human Resources	Inspirational Human Resources with strong business acumen and ability to relate religion with business.

¹ Abraham Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1954)

Table 2: Changing Role of HR Function in the Workplace

Business Era	HR Paradigm	Nature of HR Department	Role of HR Head	Background of HR Managers	Impact of HR Role	HR Role Positioning in Organizations	Reward System	Links with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs ²
1900s-1940s	Control and Discipline.	Administration Department	Bull-dog	Army and Police	Control at workers' level.	Supervisory or Junior Management depending on the size of operation.	Hourly/daily wages.	Physiological Needs
1940s-1950s	Ensure Compliance with organizational rules and regulations.	Industrial Relations Department	Watch-dog	Industrial Relations and Law	Compliance to organizational policies up to supervisory level.	Junior/Middle Management reporting to Admn. Or Finance head.	Fixed monthly salary. Combination of both fixed and variable monetary rewards, pension plans with opportunities to be paid for over-time. Fixed annual salary increase, etc.	Safety Needs
1960s-1970s	Train and Manage.	Personnel Management Department	Trouble shooter and a coach	Personnel Management	Providing personnel policies and systems support to other functional heads.	Middle Management reporting to Operations.	Permanent employment to all with fixed salaries, as well as terminal benefits and training opportunities. Challenging work environment, annual functions, events, etc.	Love and Association Needs
1980s and early 90s	Develop and Motivate.	HR Department	Business Partner	Psychology and Business	A line-manager providing HR related support to other colleagues in support departments and business units.	Senior Management reporting to directors/CEO.	Permanent employment for superior performers with quick opportunities of career growth. A combination of monetary and non-monetary rewards including fixed salary, bonuses, medical and other facilities, other achievement-oriented awards with opportunities for self-growth and opportunities to joins clubs, forums and professional bodies.	Esteem Needs
Late 90s and Beyond	Educate and Inspire.	Human Capital Management Function	Clergy and an agent of change	Behavioral Sciences and Religion	Total Business and the society at large.	Advisory and Inspirational role providing expert advice to the board. Reporting to the Chairman/share-holders with the functional/line management responsibilities pushed down to business unit heads.	Performance-based flexi-pay with all the over-heads plugged into fixed salary, flexi-hours and options to work from home and providing opportunities for balancing work and personal responsibilities.	Self-Actualization Needs

Table 3: Changing Nature and Focus of Training in the Workplace

Business Era	Nature of Training	Topics of Training	Training Delivery Methodology	Selection of Venue for Training	Individual's Dimensions and Focus of Training	Frequency of Training	Impact of Training	Trainer's Background	Trainer's Associations
1900s-1940s	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1940s-1950s	On-the-job training including vocational training and various productivity enhancement techniques.	Technical training in safety, productivity and system compliance.	Practical Demonstration	On-the-Job	(Physical) Body	Whenever required but not too often	Individual's Performance on the assembly-line.	Hands-on experience of doing the work	More often, supervisors of the respective functions, full-time employee of the organization
1960s-1970s	Functional and customized training focusing on "what".	Functional training in the respective areas of expertise.	Class-room training. Combination of presentations, demonstration	Class-rooms and training centers	(Intellectual) Mind	At different levels in career growth	Individual's Performance in one's area of expertise.	Experts in various functions of management.	Business school teachers.

² Abraham Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1954)

1980s and early 90s	Management and behavioral training focusing on intra-personal and interpersonal skills providing answer to "how."	Teamwork, communication, assertiveness, leadership, stress management, time management, problem-solving, conflict management, dealing with difficult colleagues and customers, handling, customer service, etc.	s, etc. Activity-based and Experiential training with exercises and games.	Hotels and resorts away from jobs	(Emotional) Heart	Annual, Bi-annual	Inter-group and intra-group performance.	Experts in people and management skills	Outside management trainers and consultants
Late 90s and Beyond	Spiritual and religious training providing answers to "why".	Who we are? What are we here for? What does God want us to do? What is real success? Why to help each other in common goal? What are the consequences of our actions? Why we need to choose right over wrong? How to build a peaceful and satisfied life? Why to be self responsible? Why to learn and continue learning? etc.	Inspirational talks and story-telling.	Initial paradigm changing sessions away from job on a place close to the nature followed by small session in the morning assemblies, where the action is.	(Spiritual and Religious) Soul	Continuous and on weekly/daily basis with small inspirational sessions	Total business, all stakeholders, and the society at large.	Experts in religion and its applications in various aspects of life	Head of business units under the guidance of HR head as well as outside clergy and other religious institutions