

# HUMANIZING THE WORKPLACE REPORT

Practical Integration of Employees in  
an Organization as a Performance  
Strategy

*Partnering for Impact!*

HUMANIZING THE HUMAN  
2022

**PUBLISHED BY:**



## Project Team

1. Dr. Christine Phiri Mushibwe, Vice Chancellor, Unicaf University in Zambia
2. Regina Huber, CEO, Transform Your Performance
3. Dr. Justine Chinoperekweyi, CEO, Centre for Organization Leadership and Development
4. Dr. Nathan Musonda, Dean of Academics, Unicaf University in Zambia
5. Tsitsi Chundu, HR Consultant, PremoCapio, Zimbabwe
6. Samantha Nadine Abude Sales, Independent Consultant/Facilitator



## Consultants

In addition to the above mentioned, the following individuals participated during the consultative sessions as Panelists. Their insights inform the Report.

1. Patrick Trottier, Founder, Institute of Emergent Organizational Development & Emergent Change® (EODC®)
2. Nosisa Mokoka: Independent Trustee and various current and former Non-Executive Directorships in South Africa; Lecturer - Da Vinci Institute, Johannesburg, South Africa; Founder: Nosisa Mokoka Consulting.
3. Pumulo Muchuu, Accounting & Finance Professional, Zambia
4. Cleopas Chiketa, President, Institute of People Management of Zimbabwe
5. Mabel Mongo'mba, CEO, Belcomm Zambia
6. Owen Chilala Sikatumba, CEO, Zambia Institute of Human Resources

## Research Assistant

1. Chiedza Kadare, Prima Consulting

## Supporting Organizations

1. Institute of Emergent Organizational Development & Emergent Change® (EODC®)
2. Institute of People Management of Zimbabwe
3. Belcomm Zambia
4. Zambia Institute of Human Resources

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**Ubuntu. “I am because you are.”**

**Motho ke motho ka batho (Sotho/Tswana). A person is a person through other people.**

**Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu (Zulu). A person is a person through other people.**

**Umntu ngumntu ngabantu (Xhosa). A person is a person through other people**

**Munhu munhu nevanhu (Shona). A person through other people.**

**Ndiri nekuti tiri (Shona). I am because we are.**

# Preface

The workplace should become a generative place of intelligence, coming together, and co-creating possibilities together. Our collective wisdom must always be experimenting and interrogating together so that great things can emerge. It's about going to that inner place of knowing, it's about everyone in the workplace being conscious and mindful that we are in an era where if we want great things to emerge we have to come together and create a workplace that is sensitive to people. The capabilities of what people can create are infinite, unless limited by self, by others, and by the environments people find themselves in.

The 'Humanizing the Workplace Report' is a product of the joint consultative sessions facilitated by Unicaf University Zambia, Transform Your Performance (USA), and Centre for Organization Leadership and Development (Zimbabwe).

Unicaf University Zambia, Centre for Organization Leadership and Development, and Transform Your Performance facilitated workshop series targeted at engaging the corporate sector with practical interventions, insights and innovations to enable employee integration, promote change readiness, and use transparent, transformational communication to dispel fear and build trust among all stakeholders in organizations. The sessions were aimed at facilitating the co-creation of sustainable and strategic alternatives for long-term socio-economic transformation.



The Report integrates insights from the following themed consultative sessions:

- Part 1: Practical Integration of People as a Performance Enhancement Strategy
- Part 2: Humanizing the Workplace

The report provides principles and practical insights that organizations need to embrace in order to humanize workplaces and humanize leadership and management.

*“It is time to dismiss binary ‘either / or’ thinking of the 20th Century.*

*It is time for systemic thinking of the 21st Century.*

*It is not ‘organizational sustainability / profits’, or, ‘humanizing the workplace’.*

*Such are integral, systemic processes.*

*It just makes good business, and people sense.”*  
**Patrick Trottier, 2001**



The Humanizing the Workplace Report aims to shed light on:

- key themes that can inform organizations' strategic and operational roadmaps for the desired change
- key principles to support the adoption and manifestation of practical integration and humanizing workplaces
- key stakeholders identification, consultation and collaborative partnerships to ensure seamless implementation of humanizing workplaces.
- practical recommendations for the implementation of this report.

The Report submits that it is important for organizations to deliberately humanize the workplace through inclusive leadership – this is about seeing individual employees with their unique genius, with the talents, personal strengths, and passions they bring to the table. It is also about honoring all of this through their careers and through-out their careers. It is also about recognizing organized formal and informal groupings in the organization as these are crucial for any large-scale change effort. In spite of shifts leading to growth in AI, industrialization and mechanization, organizations must appreciate that the catalyzers of any work or business concept would be the human being.

The implications of humanized workplaces are positive, through heightened productivity, innovation and quality performance outcomes that can be derived organization-wide, as well as for general human development.

*How do we build and create workplaces that emphasizes the human element so that people can become the best versions of themselves?*

To share your insights please reach to us through the following email addresses:

Unicaf University in Zambia – [c.phiri@zambia.unicaf.org](mailto:c.phiri@zambia.unicaf.org)

Transform Your Performance – [regina@transformyourperformance.com](mailto:regina@transformyourperformance.com)

Centre for Organization Leadership and Development – [info@centreold.com](mailto:info@centreold.com)

Business, Governments, and workers must work together to devise strategies that foster humanize workplaces. Healthy workplaces are key to heightened productivity, high levels of human development as well as socio-economic transformation.



**Justine Chinoperekweyi**

*CEO & President*

*Centre for Organization Leadership and Development*

**WORKSHOP** UNICAF UNIVERSITY Centre for Organization Leadership & Development TYP

Reframing Corporate Perspectives Series facilitates Consultative Session on

**Practical Integration of Employees in an Organization as a Performance Strategy**

June 17, 2021 | 2:00 PM (CAT) **LIVE**

Host: Samantha Nadine A. Sales

Speakers: Pumulo Muchau, Accounting & Finance Professional, Zambia

Nosisa V. Mokoka, Chairperson: Human Resources Committee of Council (HRCCO), University of South Africa

Tsitsi Chundu, Member – Organization Leadership and Development Network, HR Consultant, PremoCapio, Zimbabwe

**WORKSHOP** UNICAF UNIVERSITY Centre for Organization Leadership & Development TYP

Reframing Corporate Perspectives Series facilitates Consultative Session on

**Practical Integration of Employees in an Organization as a Performance Strategy**

April 15, 2021 | 2:00 PM (CAT) **LIVE**

Host: Samantha Nadine A. Sales

Speakers: Dr Nathan Musonda, Dean of Academics, Unicaf University in Zambia

Regina Huber, CEO of Transform Your Performance, Multicultural Transformational Leadership Coach, Global Inspirational Speaker & Author of Speak up, Stand out and Shine

Tsitsi Chundu, Member – Organization Leadership and Development Network, HR Consultant, PremoCapio, Zimbabwe

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**WORKSHOP** UNICAF UNIVERSITY Centre for Organization Leadership & Development TYP

Reframing Corporate Perspectives Series facilitates Consultative Session on

Humanizing the Workplace

October 22, 2021 3:00 PM (CAT) **LIVE**

Host: Samantha Nadine A. Sales

Speakers: Cleopas Chiketa, President, Institute of People Management Zimbabwe

Mabel Mungu'mba, CEO, Belcomin Zambia

Owen Chilala Sikatumba, CEO, Zambia Institute of Human Resources

**WORKSHOP** UNICAF UNIVERSITY Centre for Organization Leadership & Development TYP

Reframing Corporate Perspectives Series facilitates Consultative Session on

**Humanizing the Workplace**

July 29, 2021 | 3:00 PM (CAT)

Host: Samantha Nadine A. Sales

Speakers: Regina Huber, CEO of Transform Your Performance, Multicultural Transformational Leadership Coach, Global Inspirational Speaker & Author of Speak up, Stand out and Shine

Patrick Troitler, Founder & Director, The Institute of Emergent Organizational Development and Emergent Change (EIOC)<sup>®</sup>

Dr Christine Mushibwe Phiri, Vice Chancellor of Unicaf University Zambia

**WORKSHOP** UNICAF UNIVERSITY Centre for Organization Leadership & Development TYP

Reframing Corporate Perspectives Series facilitates Consultative Session on

**Practical Integration of Employees in an Organization as a Performance Strategy**

Unicaf University in Zambia, Centre for Organization Leadership and Development, and Transform Your Performance will be facilitating workshops and webinar series targeted at engaging the corporate sector with practical interventions, insights and innovations to facilitate employee integration, promote change readiness, and use transparent, bidirectional communication to dispel fear and build trust among all stakeholders in organizations. We call upon mission-critical professionals, scholars and organizations to partner the vision towards the co-creation of sustainable and strategic alternatives for socio-economic transformation.

Register for the April 15, 2021 Consultative Session. Targeted Participants: SMEs as well as large companies.

To partner for this vision, please write to: [info@centreold.com](mailto:info@centreold.com), [c.phiri@zambia.unicaf.org](mailto:c.phiri@zambia.unicaf.org), or [regina@transformyourperformance.com](mailto:regina@transformyourperformance.com).

www.centreold.com +263 774 328 063

www.unicafuniversity.ac.zm +260 211 250322

www.transformyourperformance.com +1 347 821-8050

**WORKSHOP** UNICAF UNIVERSITY Centre for Organization Leadership & Development TYP

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www.centreold.com +263 774 328 063

www.transformyourperformance.com +260 211 250322

www.unicafuniversity.ac.zm +1347 821-8050



## Key Themes

- Inclusive leadership
  - Shifting emotional and emotional frameworks
  - Lead and interact with others respectfully
  - Integrated reporting
  - Co-creation over competition
  - Humanizing workplaces and leadership
  - Empathy rather than sympathy at work
  - Deconstructing hierarchies
- Infohumanics™

## Key Principles

- Build trust through transparent and sufficient communication throughout the entire organization
- Encourage self-empowering mindsets
- Leading and managing starts with Self
- Employees should have a good general understanding of business
- More power in shared power
- Co-creation of interventions with all key stakeholders



## Practical Recommendations

- Creating and giving people the safe space to participate and fully engage in an organization
  - Shift from closed systems to open organizational systems (transparency) through the restatement/revision of the organizational mission.
  - Ensure a sense of commitment and ownership among all organizational stakeholders through the cultivation of stewardship and ambassadorship by all.
  - Develop people centric policies and procedures (with a human face)
  - Exploration, open meaningful dialogue, and 'letting go' of status quo perceptions to explore novel ideas
  - Self-Agency, Co-creation, and Self-Organizing Capabilities
  - Use technology to humanize workplaces
  - Humanize leadership and management to lead and integrate with others respectfully
  - Deconstruct hierarchical siloes and embrace networked organizations
  - Manifest corporate principles and values in all organizational activities
-

# Part 1: Practical Integration of People in an Organization as a Performance Enhancement Strategy

## Introduction

The growth of networked organizations and agile teams require the practical integration of people in an organization as a performance enhancement strategy. Unfortunately, most organizations are still stuck in traditional ivory tower approaches which are predominantly hierarchical and premised on top-down decision-making approaches. Practical integration is about sustainability in that it facilitates transformational growth and development. Practical integration is key no matter how costly it might be. Organizations should consider practical integration as an investment and not a cost.

Practical Integration is all about appreciating the whole person in terms of their physical, psychological, cognitive and emotional make-up. It's all about creating environments, policies, processes and practices that bring the whole person to the job. It involves creating a conducive work environment and giving people a safe space to participate and fully engage in an organization. Employees who are fully and practically engaged can do more to drive sustainable organizational success. This can be achieved when individual and organizational goals and objectives are aligned with the external and internal influences. Practical integration creates effective collaboration and teamwork.

Trust is the basis for collaboration and cooperation in all senses. Employees can only share their best talents if they feel safe to do so – psychological safety. Without trust, employees start covering or hiding their best ideas and capabilities. Greater trust generates higher creativity and innovation. It positively impacts employee engagement and satisfaction – leading to agile teams, higher team engagement and productivity. Communication is improved, less conflicts, and people can focus at the tasks at hand. It's the management's responsibility to build trust through transparent and sufficient communication through-out the entire organization. This takes degrees of 'letting-go' of management's traditional power base, and a shift in mind-set within oneself and how one sees others. All the different pieces of an organization can work together more smoothly as one designs an organization to do so. Greater levels of trust means that the organization becomes a more agreeable place to work for – for everybody working in it and those who work with it from outside the organization. Employee loyalty increases and a higher external image is created which makes it easier to attract new top talent and retain existing talent.

Leaders must endeavor to create space for people to pursue their own sense of what they are capable of, to create opportunities for people to explore such, and to be able to experiment with innovative contributions for emergent development of the organization. This can be done through encouraging self-empowering mindsets. Employees should have confidence in themselves and the ability to amplify and refract that confidence to others. This ensures employees can encourage others for the greater good thereby leading positive organizational and social change. Organizations should help people move from victim mindset to self-empowering mindset, a mindset of self-agency, as evidenced by the degree to which they exhibit their creative abilities – curiosity, imagination, exploration, creativity, innovation, problem-solving.

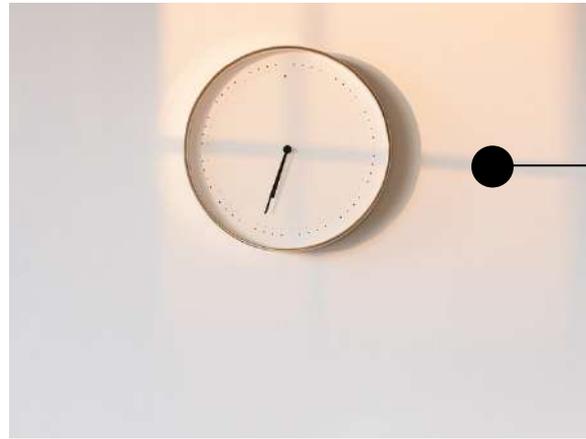
Leaders need to trust each other. Leaders also need to trust people in non-leadership positions. This takes effective leadership guidance and support. Leaders need to create environments of trust where people have ‘trusting experiences’. This sets a framework to manifest a culture of trust and mutual support for everyone throughout the organization.

Organizations need to have a broader view of inclusiveness and move away from putting people into categories and groups (boxes). Consider employees as individuals with their unique talent and skills – that’s honoring diversity and it’s part of humanizing the workplace. This helps to build more trust.

### **1.1 Need for Practical Integration – Role of Managers**

Practical integration should be part of the organisation’s strategy. It should be part of the strategy and well communicated to all employees and functional areas. Practical integration is not an event or a program but a continuous process where employees experience to be integrated. In a hierarchical structure, managers should consider the views of lower-level employees and fuse with the C-suite strategies. In addition, the vision and mission must be shared, so that all employees strive for the same organizational outputs and outcomes.

There has been a huge gap in practical integration due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions and lockdowns. The workplace was shut down and the homes, some of which are physically disintegrated, became the workplace. Technology has however, come to the rescue as with its various online platforms that has helped organizations to keep connected and integrated through drastic yet necessary step change in respect of their respective missions. Leaders have a huge assignment to be creative in the way the online engagements are done so that they are accessible, meaningful, integrative and inclusive. One key element is ensuring a systematic approach to communication. Clear scheduling of tasks and setting of timelines will help to have a flawless work flow. It is important, however, to take into considerations some of the infrastructural and network challenges as well as the ability to practically use technology, which employees might be facing due to working at home.



Practical integration requires proper ways of handling change. Whilst there may be resistance to change from the employees, it is critical to consider closely how the change is introduced and managed. In fact, when employees are fully integrated, they are actually part of the change and can be acting as the change agents. Processes in the organisation must be such that the employees are not only comfortable with change but contribute meaningfully to the change. Training and mentoring help equip employees with tools to deal with fear, uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding change. Many times, 'resistance' is merely a symptom of how change is approached. Such approaches that merely reflect the 'status quo' begs the question; 'So what is new here - it is the same old experience.' Or, when a person is so institutionalized into a unhealthy work environment and has learned to survive such, they ask themselves if they really want to trust and support any changes. Sometimes this perspective moves to a very extreme state called 'learned helplessness'. (P. Trottier)

Regina Huber in an article *New Business Consciousness*, stresses that leadership is leading and integrating with others respectfully. Honoring others in a way that allows them to freely bring their individual genius. Every employee wants to feel good at work. According to the article, the following exchanges would be helpful:

- Prejudice for empathy
- Judgment for compassion
- Competition for co-creation
- Separation for connectedness
- Fear for love

Managers should strategize for the practical integration of people. Practical integration should be part of the strategy and well communicated to all employees and functional areas.

Managers should realize and appreciate the need for practical integration of employees.

Practical integration is a tool to create a sustainable culture. It creates space for creativity and loyalty. It creates a sense of belonging and ownership. Thus, the employee will behave in a way that builds the organisation not just for current benefit but for the future.

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Regina Huber stresses that leading starts with self. Self-inquiry leads to self-discovery leading to greater self-awareness. Transformational leadership must be authentic leadership – it includes the leader-person. Self-awareness in connection to social awareness. The most beneficial type of transformational leadership is heart-driven leadership, ethical leadership that turns into a partnership – where power is shared and not exerted over others. Authoritative leadership do not benefit the expected outcomes. Managers need to appreciate that hierarchical organizational structures are outdated and should constantly ask the question ‘How do we integrate the newer ones?’ It is important to move from closed to open organizational systems. Organizations should move towards more participative approaches – that’s what integration is all about.

Unfortunately, most organisations have not transitioned to become open systems, they have continued to operate in silos having numerous boundaries that hamper practical integration. For this movement to take place, leadership including middle management need to own fully into the idea and lead with the benefits of open systems in mind. Further, leadership need to understand practical integration as a good business and performance strategy.



Employees are sometimes not able to become fully integrated because of victimization from the leadership, supervisors and even peers. Sometimes leaders themselves suffer from fear and mistrust and then exert power as a way to survive. To strengthen practical integration leadership should come up with programs that help the organisation to interact in a free environment where everyone de-roles and relate at colleague level despite the positions at work.

Practical integration can be achieved through:

1. Humanizing the workplace
2. Practicing integration in earnest
3. Informed Inquiry and Effective Engagement
4. Constructive and developmental Feedback

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## 1.2 Need for Practical Integration of People in Organizations

Integrated reporting focuses on all areas of the organization in an aligned way. There is need to pay particular attention to the underlying principles of reporting and not merely the form of the reports. Every organization can come up with their own reporting structure guided by the underlying principles – focusing on strategy, relationships, stakeholders and so on. In reporting there is need to also focus on people. Employees should have a good understanding of the business. The focus should also include the external stakeholders. Employees should be ambassadors of the organization. The employees are the company.

Fully engaged and integrated employees have a good understanding of the business. Employers should clearly articulate the vision, mission strategy and current standpoint. This is key in integrated reporting because employees are ambassadors of organisation and should have the right set of information for reporting, whether formally or informally.



There are two ways to reporting – principles-based and stakeholder relationship-based reporting. Under principles-based reporting, the employees of the organization must carry the vision and objectives of the organization. Therefore, employees should have a full understanding of the organization. Relationship with all stakeholders is fundamental to integrated reporting. Practical integration indicates that all stakeholders of the organization have a role to play in the growth and development of the organization. Value-creation is important. Integrated reporting should have a holistic view to creating value.

Governments require that organizations relook how performance is recorded, with a focus on shareholders and stakeholders. Corporate stakeholders have a significant role in the performance of an organization. Integrated reporting captures the inputs or contributions of all stakeholders. Good integrated reporting gives space for everybody to take accountability. Integrated reporting is an intentional and deliberate effort for organizations to rethink corporate reporting. Organizations should move from traditional siloed reporting to integrated reporting. This is a deliberate response to market regulators, standard boards, and regulations of accounting authorities.



Audited financial statements are insufficient to discharge the duty of accountability reporting. A sustainability report is insufficient, if it does not cover all the stakeholders' inputs – the interrelated and interconnected parts of the organization. Reporting should reflect the said interconnectedness, common good efforts and resources. This is consistent to an inclusive and sustainable capital market systems. The metrics of performance are no longer limited to gross revenues, net profits, and shareholder value; but are concerned with social, human, and environmental considerations.

Practical integration should not be treated as a program or project that has a start and an end in an organisation. Practical integration starts all the way from job interviews. Most organisations put a preamble on an advert to help interested candidates understand the organisation. During the interviews candidates are asked about the organisation and how their own personal goals fit into the organisation. This part is key because how well an employee integrates into the organisation is a factor of how their own vision and goals align to those of the organisation.

This part is key because how well an employee integrates into the organisation is a factor of how their own vision and goals align to those of the organisation. Employees contribute to integrated reporting when they are fully and actively engaged and integrated into the organisation. Considering that most organisations in Africa are struggling to optimally reward employees, it is critical to build a sense of belonging in the employees.

There is a relationship between practical integration and wellbeing. It is important to note that both sides need to watch the wellbeing of each other. The organisation looks after the employees and the employees should look after the wellbeing of the organisation. Fully engaged and integrated employees will not take advantage that they are out of site and give lame excuses but will be committed and do the best in the circumstance.

The tone at the top is very key when it comes to wellbeing. The leadership should work towards giving the employees the sense of belonging. There is need to come up with Code of ethics with disciplinary code. This will help to deal with delays and other disciplinary actions. Leadership should be more interactive. In doing this it's important to acknowledge that for most employees the workplace is more than just home, but have become families with a lot of social connections and interaction. For the wellbeing it's important for organisation not to only focus on providing laptops and data but to consider the work spaces as well. Some employees might not have proper work station and this overtime might affect the health of the employees.

The leadership need to find ways to integrate employees socially amidst the wave on remote working. Most employees are not socialised to work from home. Unfortunately, there seem to have been a gap in terms of integration even in the face-to-face environment, where employees are in one room but are disintegrated. Training in self-awareness, social skills is key to improve the social intelligence within the organisation. Exploiting trending technology will help bridge the gap created by remote working.



### **1.3 Approaches to Practical Integration of Employees**

- Revamp the recruitment and onboarding process
- Integration should not be treated as a program but ongoing process
- Culture of the organization should promote collaborative networks and agile teams
- Create safe psychological spaces for all employees
- Rethink and revamp communication and reporting systems
- The tone at the top is important – Board and C-suites
- Effort to identify and recognize institutional stakeholders
- Be more interactive and promote participatory approaches



## 1.4 Feasibility/Usefulness of Practical Integration of Employees

Practical integration creates greater engagement which leads to creativity and higher productivity. It therefore positively impacts the bottom-line. Integration of employees results in more innovative approaches, innovative products, more effective and productive teams and it has an impact on the overall organizational culture which benefits the corporate image, product image, the market power, and employer brand. It is without doubt that practical integration of employees is worth making a part of performance review. This will incentivize corporate leaders to consider this part of their responsibility.

Organizations should ensure that the processes and procedures for employee integration are efficient and effective. Practical integration reduces the turnover rate in organizations. When employees are integrated, they bring their best selves to work and the organization enhance the capacity to actualize and optimize its potential. Practical integration addresses the challenge of low engagement. Effort is required to practically integrate employees in an organization and the practice should be consistent, it's not a one time and done activity but an ongoing process. The process of practical integration of employees requires fluid transparent communication, bonding activities, proactive encouragement by team leaders and ownership by all levels of management. The practice must be lived by all levels, reflected in performance reviews and be made an official goal of the organization.

Practical integration makes the employees feel at home, especially when their voices are being heard. It therefore enhances a sense of ownership.



### **1.5 Resistance to Change – Practical Integration of Employees**

Managers often feel threatened by the changes that practical integration may bring, especially changes that are brought up by more junior employees or colleagues. Change helps organizations to survive. Indeed, organizations need to continually change and develop. Hence, managers need to be in a position to respond to change. Employees in most cases appreciate the change that can transform an organization.

Very few people accept and welcome change easily. Corporate leaders need to accept change and leverage on it for growth and development. Fear is unproductive and doesn't inspire participation or contribution. Organizations miss out on potential awesome ideas that create great organizations they promote fearful environments. Change is transformation, change is evolution and it is an opportunity for managers to grow personally, to enhance their own competence. Working in a stagnating organization doesn't really further your own career growth and advancement.

Change may bring uncertainty, but we don't always realize that stagnation also bring uncertainty. Organizations need to ensure that there are clear and scheduled communication platforms.

### **1.6 More Power in Shared Power**

Shared success is sustainable success. It is geared towards long term success for the entire team and for the organization. An engaged team is more successful. If a manager is a power grabber and only concerned about his own position and authority – that's a typical fear concept – the people in his or her team are less vested in the team's success. This is because they may not see evidence of their career path advancing. People should be given space to make decisions. Less decision-making power means less accountability. Shared decision-making leads to automatic accountability, whereas imposed decisions do not. Power over others is not real power.



## 1.7 Roadblocks & Guidelines to Practical Integration

- Ivory Tower Planning
- 19th and 20th Century practices and mindset, which are predominantly hierarchical, leader-centered and top-down
- Hierarchical silos
- Lack of clarity on reporting lines
- Failure to gain senior management commitment
- Lack of trust-based cultures and environments
- Competition rather than co-creation and collaboration

Organizations need to maintain role clarity and good teamwork. Senior management need to demonstrate a sense of commitment and ownership. Senior managers need to listen to junior staff and integrate their ideas. The future is in co-creation.

### Part 2: Humanizing the Workplace

There is need to have policies with a human face in organizations. The focus of this Report is to support organizations to rethink approaches to humanizing the workplace. In line with Part 1 of 'Practical Integration of People as a Performance Enhancement Strategy', employees are human beings and must be treated as such humane across all economic sectors. There are a number of factors, changes, opportunities, and economic realities that make humanizing the workplace a strategic business imperative. Many organizational routines and culture are grossly inhuman and deplete people's enduring capabilities. The concept of humanizing the workplace should be central to organizations' strategic and operational roadmaps as well as their overall missions.

*'Humanizing' is the manifestation of people's inalienable human rights, people's innate human nature as well as the manifestation of people's natural abilities as a whole person.*

*(Patrick Trottier, 2012)*

## 2.1 The Concept of Humanizing the Workplace

“People are not “things” to be manipulated, labeled, boxed, bought, and sold. Above all else, they are not “human resources”. We are entire human beings, containing the whole of the evolving universe, limitless until we are limited, whether by self or others. We must examine the concept of leading and following with new eyes. We must examine the concept of superior and subordinate with increasing skepticism. We must examine the concept of management and labor with new beliefs. And we must examine the nature of organizations that demand such distinctions with an entirely different consciousness.”

*The Art of Chaordic Leadership - by Dee Hock, Founder and CEO Emeritus, Visa*



***‘Humanizing the workplace’ is about seeing the human in each employee. Sadly, this is not happening in some organizations today. With today’s use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for talent management, humanizing the workplace becomes more challenging. This is because AI thinks in categories and keywords as a result of algorithms built on categories and keywords. Therefore, there is not enough room for individuality or Distinctive Uniqueness (a term used by Regina Huber as one of the pillars of her signature coaching framework) – that in itself being a huge problem. This categorization is reinforced by putting people into so-called affinity groups, which intrinsically means people are supposed to have certain affinities according to skin color, ethnicity, or gender. The categorization leads us to lose sight of the individual and the human essence, which makes it dehumanizing. However, this is not what human uniqueness or inclusiveness is all about because it’s not honoring our desire for individuation, for expressing our best selves as humans, and for fulfilling our potential, for aligning what we do with our passion and our purpose, and our unique life path.***



## ***As humans we are naturally inclusive; why then are we putting humans into categories?***

The current ways of promoting diversity and inclusiveness are victimizing on certain groups. Victimization keeps people from self-empowering, it keeps people 'small,' and it keeps people from self-expressing. In most organizations this is done intentionally and for identity politics, which is very dangerous. It is therefore important to humanize the workplace through inclusive leadership – this is about seeing the individual employee with their unique genius, with the talents, personal strengths, and passions they bring to the table. It is also about honoring all of this through their careers and through-out their careers. This can be done through:

- Adapting job descriptions
- Considering people's strengths and talents when assigning projects
- Customizing training programs
- Listening and hearing everyone before making decisions about them
- Equality in the workplace (work areas to be comfortable for all regardless of hierarchy)

Humanizing is the manifestation of people's inalienable human rights, their innate human nature as well as the manifestation of their natural abilities of humans as a whole person (Patrick Trottier, 2012).

It's about making the workplace a better place for human beings to function or work at. Many people spend more time in the work environment than at home. If the workplace lacks human elements, it's most likely people are being micro-managed – then there is a problem. Organizations should employ 'people with the capabilities' not 'people as machines' to be used and manipulated to achieve organizational goals. Therefore, humanizing the workplace is about ensuring that people function as human beings that have a human heart.

Humanizing the workplace is a process where organizations look at a human being as a human being. A man is a spiritual man, hence the need for authentic connection.



This connects to the African Concept of Ubuntu – I am because you are, you are because I am. As human beings, we need to move beyond connecting through the minds but with our hearts. Organizations must create safe spaces for the manifestation of such authentic connections. People are people and we need to connect with them in their individuality and begin to harness great results. It is important for organizations to understand what drives people as individuals, and even as a collective. The humanizing the workplace concept is critical even in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The world turns every so often – there has been significant shifts leading to industrialization and mechanization. Most organizations forgot that the catalyzers of any work or business concept would be the human being. In thinking about that, the concept of humanizing the workplace is taking us back to being more right-brained as we work in our organizations.



## **HOW DO WE BUILD AND CREATE A WORKPLACE WHERE THERE IS THE HUMAN ELEMENT THRIVING SO THAT THEY CAN BRING THE BEST VERSION OF THEMSELVES?**

The workplace should become a generative place of intelligence, coming together, co-creating possibilities together. Our collective wisdom must always be experimenting and interrogating together so that great things can emerge. It's about going to that inner place of knowing, it's about everyone in the workplace being conscious and mindful that we are in an era where if we want great things to emerge we have to come together and create a workplace that is sensitive to people. People are people unless limited by self or by others.

Humanity is realizing now that we almost got lost, so the principle of humanizing the workplace is getting back to what it should have been in the original place. The original place is that of understanding that all we do is about man or human being. A workplace should be and must be, without any doubt, a place of opportunity to develop man in his full potential so that a human being is not limited from becoming the best version of themselves because of processes and systems that we put in place.

When we are right-brained we begin to look at being more people-centered at work, understanding that it's easy to buy machines than to replace people. In some organizations there is less conversations about the wellbeing of people. In organizations there should be no "them and us attitudes". The workplace should be more mindful. At the workplace we also have an enemy, a good enemy, but can also destroy us because as we are focused on things. Furthermore, the social media is focused on bringing out the emotional side of human beings.

When people are inspired, they work better together. If there is an emotional space of empathy rather than sympathy, the workplace becomes a better place to be.

## **2.2 Management Pressures that Supersede Humanizing the Workplace**

Dehumanizing the workplace is and has been a process. It is also critical to be aware that management, leadership...well everyone is dehumanized to one degree, or another. Some survive and stay human. There are usually some negative consequences for that, such as the in-crowd/out-crowd syndrome.

The following are some of the management pressures that supersede humanizing the workplace:

- Demands for 'right ways' of working
- Self-identity is engulfed in positional and defined roles and the need to maintain status quo, we act out our roles, and we lose ourselves and what really matters...
- Laser focus on bottom-line results as shown by numbers ... expectation of time and results.
- Quarterly reports – tied to careers, bonuses, promotions
- Pressures from Boards, Stakeholders, Shareholders, Community
- View of management and leadership as semi-gods

These pressures seem to keep people in leadership and management positions to 'play it safe' and stay within the parameters of the 'status quo'. In a sour environment you cannot get desired results. This can lead to presenteeism. Stress, confusion and conflict inhibits people and performance. Such also keep others in their place, mostly focused on projects and tasks, and not the organization itself - this last part is usually 'off-limits' and is considered the 'territory' of management. This becomes a 'hamster wheel' of self-reinforcement.

## **2.3 Approaches to Humanizing the Workplace**

The recruitment stage needs to be strengthened. Corporate leaders have much to do with regards to the people employed in organizations. Leaders need to realize that they are humans as the people they bring to organizations. It is also important to understand that employees have a brain, heart, mind and soul. It's not only leaders who have the privilege of a mind that thinks or a heart that beats – it's everybody. It is also important to let employees have the right to know that it's ok to make mistakes.

The starting point is to acknowledge that we all have shortcomings and the shortcomings need to be developed to enhance people's capabilities (vs. negative judgments) in order to help an organization manifest performance (vs. production), for people to add value, and for individuals and groups to 'experience' success. No one is expected to be perfect.

Another point is for corporate Principles and Values to be manifested by becoming the 'guideline' all through the recruitment process, developmental processes, succession planning, and career development so as to continuously bring in and develop people's capabilities congruent with the type of 'culture' desired (Patrick Trottier, 2013).

Human Resource Management is not about putting people in a box and expecting them to function in that box. Managing is understanding the people in a team. Employees should not be treated as machines, and just be told what to do. In fact, this stifles their creativity, which limits productivity, solution orientation, and innovation. Flexibility is a key part of understanding humans as human beings rather than mere imposition of policies on people.

Freedom is not assigned by organizations or by politicians; freedom is a human birth right. People have a say in their careers and in the work they do, a right to express their career visions and goals. People should be recognized for their contributions and be able to integrate their work into the rest of their lives in a meaningful way, which allows them to take care of their wellbeing and their families. This calls for a mindset shift from the popular notion of ‘work-life balance’ because work is part of life and there can never be balance – but we can set priorities together with our employers.

Organizations are quick to demand hard work, engagement, commitment, and loyalty but what do they give in exchange? It’s not only about the money and the perks, humans don’t want to just survive; they want to thrive. Hence, it’s everyone’s birth right to be honored, respected, and acknowledged. This is when people will show their best selves, and contribute their capabilities to achieving organizational goals and strategies.

“Organizations need to take a systemic emergent approach to humanizing the workplace and the key is by embedding and manifesting human principles and values into the fabric of the organization” (Patrick Trottier, 2013). It’s not about speeches, luncheons, training, etc. There is need to shift from the objectification of people, the labelling of people as resources, capital or assets. The labels of “human resources” or “human capital” degrades employees.

Leadership needs to create congruency between people’s individual, family, community, and corporate values. This helps to embed human values into the fabric of the organization by working with leadership to design organizations that give that experience of humanness to all stakeholders. These organizations become models within society.

Words matter and words create our reality. Organizations need to reconsider words, tone, and language used in addressing and dealing with people.

*“People are not ‘resources’, ‘assets’, ‘capital’ or any of the modern terms that organizations / HR uses. This objectifies people into ‘labels’. People are simply people.”*

*Patrick Trottier, 2015)*

Otto Scharmer’s Theory U is a tool that managers and leaders can use to humanize the workplace. The theory can offer the realization that as we use all the sophisticated tools, organizations continue to get unfavorable results. Managers must suspend the voice of judgment and switch to the voice of working with an open mind. Leaders must be open to learning from everyone in the organization. We should work with an open heart- being empathetic. This helps in creating space for co-creation and the open will to know and engage. There is also need to suspend the voice of fearing to let go and bring in the generative frame of thinking around things. It’s always about how we connect and collaborate, be consultative, and then co-create – see a different future together – reframing our view of the past and point the beam of observation to us. Together we can co-create greatness. Together we can crystallize thought on a daily basis. Together we can keep renewing energy in the workplace. Be understanding and appreciate the value of others – as sources of learning and as sources of strength. We can only move well in this VUCA world if we are holding hands and doing things together. Collaboration is not about holding hands and singing kumbaya, collaboration is about entering each other’s hearts and connecting at that point where we can say safely that we are one person and we have feelings and as such we continue to dig on what’s internal. **What is the workplace for if it is not a place of healing? What is the Gross National Dignity that we can celebrate after people have come back from big disease? What are we doing as management to make it easier for people to heal?**

- The spirit of inclusion – we need to value human beings of different capacities and nature and bring them into appreciate that they are one. Once a workplace does that, it will tap into all talents and capabilities. When a human being is not appreciated or valued they learn how to withhold what they know the organizations loose what could have been learnt.
- Learn to unlearn – At times systems, approaches, processes and so on do limit human potential. Hence, to humanize the workplace we need to unlearn those barriers and tap into new ways of doing things.
- Emphasize on communication – the impact that communication creates. We must know that in everything we do we are communicating. Leaders must therefore set an example in the workplace.

- Trust building model – trust of character, trust of communication, and trust of capability. Organizations are facing a challenge when it comes to trust. In most organizations there are lower levels of trust. Trust is becoming deficient and betrayal is becoming the order of the day. We need to live and work together as a community. Giving and receiving constructive feedback is key. Negative criticism should be given with a view of developing the individual and avoiding recurrence of the negative event. Feedback is the breakfast of champions. Maintain confidentiality. Speak with good purpose. Help people learn skills. Acknowledge people’s capabilities.
- The coaching approach – the coachee is the expert and the agenda is theirs. Team coaching is fundamental. Collective leadership rather than heroic leadership. It is important to deconstruct that leadership approach. We achieve greatness as a collective.

### **Cornerstone Principles to Humanizing the Workplace**

“Existence precedes essence, which means that the most important consideration for individuals is that they are independently acting as responsible, whole conscious beings rather than what labels, roles, submissions, stereotypes, definitions, or other preconceived categories the individual may be fitted into as an artificial /pseudo-essence.” (Patrick Trottier, 2012).

Today’s organizations still have a mindset based on Scientific Management – profiling, ‘objectification’, isolating, slicing and dicing into parts, putting people into ‘boxes’ and categories.

### **Powerful Leadership Transformation (PLT)™**

The Powerful Leadership Transformation (PLT)™, the framework created by Regina Huber, consists of four pillars, one of them being Distinctive Uniqueness. It is both about unboxing people, and about uncovering, honoring, and valuing each human’s unique brilliance and genius. Leadership starts with self, but self-leadership is not possible without self-inquiry, which leads to greater self-awareness. Self-leadership can be practiced by all, not just “leadership levels”. Self-awareness and self-leadership allow people to bring out their best selves at work and in all areas of their lives. It is important for people to have a Self-Empowering Mindset and Heartset (another pillar of Transform Your Performance (TYP)™). In the context of humanizing the workplace, we must talk about ethical leadership, combining the wisdom of the heart with the mind’s intelligence. This is about compassion and co-creation rather than competition or power over others; guidance rather than authority; in short, it’s about “together” in business and recognizing that we are really all one in all areas of life, including business.



*Distinctive Uniqueness* is concerned with everything that makes us unique and special. We are all unique pieces of the overall humanity puzzle and we are meant to complement each other. Sadly, at school we are generally educated out of our *Distinctive Uniqueness*, at school for the most part because we are not taught to uncover our unique brilliance and genius. In fact, we are taught to compete and focus on what makes us better or worse than others; when in reality it's not about being better or worse; it's about being different. The underlying intention of a school system is to shape us into beings that fit into a work society, into a system that was not necessarily made for us. We are pressed into a school system that only fit certain types of talent; we are not told and taught to honor our purpose. Many employees aren't aware of their unique brilliance and their unlimited potential. Others are aware but cannot find a way to express it because it's not encouraged or they fear to not be accepted in some way (Regina Huber).

Our Distinctive Uniqueness is our unique combination of our talents, gifts, natural and acquired strengths, skills, knowledge, unique background, education, experiences, stories, character, personality, passions, purpose and so on. It's a unique package that every human being is and brings to the table, and organizations need to honor that; that is what humanizing and inclusiveness really means. Through humanizing we can create more co-creation because when we are fully aware of our own Distinctive Uniqueness it becomes easier to see it in others and to honor it in them as well. When we understand our uniqueness there is no more need to feel threatened by others who are different, there is no more need to compete. We can then bring our individual puzzle pieces together into a functional team.





## 2.4 Organizational Concepts, Attributes, and Conditions that Manifest Humanizing the Workplace

Humans are basically emotional beings. This aspect is inhibited in most organizations by simple logic, rationality, and linear thinking. We also have these 'hierarchical boxes' we put people into. In such modes, we have a propensity to 'objectify' the human.

Humans are basically 'experiential'. We learn mostly through our experiences. Manifesting new 'experiences' gives people continuous new learning situations and from this are built novel relationships, capabilities and contribution / impact. As we continue to explore and learn, other novel experiences will emerge and this becomes a 'continuous development paradigm' which itself continually emerges. Without this 'way of being and doing', we become stagnant and objectify ourselves. However, our environment plays a mighty role in this (Kurt Lewin, Field Theory, 1951).

Humans like to explore. This is natural to humans and manifests itself organically under the right conditions. Sustainability rests on diversity and our natural order to 'explore'. It just seems so much of this is inhibited in how people work together and how organizations are designed to inhibit such. Thus, we have become 'task masters'. Another mode of objectification.

Maybe if we change how we see things and people, our organizations will look and feel different than they do today.

The following 13 aspects are not in any order – it is a potpourri, a gestalt, a systemic nature of things.

- **Reframing Emotional and Cognitive Mindsets, and Co-creating Novel Perspectives**

An emergent mindset continually ‘re-frames’ one’s assumptions, beliefs and perspectives, and becomes comfortable with exploring the ‘unknown’. This is natural to humans. Many institutional frameworks try and are quite successful in subduing people within a closed emotional and mental framework. Within an organization, being comfortable with ‘changing mindsets’ manifests the organization to naturally flow with rapid change and the rising complexity of our environments, enhanced innovation thus sustainability, as well as allows us to shift our views in how we see people in our workplaces, and our societies.

Thus, how we ‘see’ people is how we interact with them and the relationships we create. If we see people as a ‘box’, we will keep them in a box. People are not ‘labels’ such as ‘assets’, ‘capital’ or merely ‘resources’ to be used, bought and sold in the marketplace of organizations. Why put them in a box at work? Open the box and they will climb out themselves.

If we see people as a whole, open capable person, we ourselves become capable of exploring our own as well as other people’s ‘wholeness’. Humans are basically emotional beings. This is inhibited in most organization and simple logic and linear thinking takes the forefront. In doing so, we ‘objectify’ the human.

Thus, how we see each other is how we treat each other. If we ‘see’ people as human assets, human capital or human resources, such is how we treat people. If we see individuals as a person with continuous, unlimited learning capabilities, then maybe we will treat them differently than boxing them within ‘controlled parameters’ where people basically become ‘task masters’.

- **The Business Model**

This is where the roots of ‘humanizing the workplace’ lie in any organization. It is a time for exploration, open meaningful dialogue and ‘letting go’ of our status quo perceptions to explore novel ideas, new guiding principles, business formations and to generally discuss the ‘ways and means’ of the organization. Intertwined in all this is what the organization stands for in terms of people, society and even the planet we all live on, and how such notions can be manifested today.

- **A Leadership Culture**

In today's organizations 'leaders' (positional and non-positional) are one of the greatest 'influencers' of corporate culture.

However, what is the culture of such leadership itself? One significant aspect is the 'values gap' between one's personal and social values and the gap that happens when one puts on her/his 'corporate / organization hat' within their prescribed role/function. Leaders can become people again through creating greater congruency and consistency amongst their personal, social and corporate values, beliefs and actions.

*"The number one aspect of Leadership we believe is: "Know thyself."*

A leadership culture is not stagnant but continually emerges as the values, norms, insights, perspectives of oneself, others and the organization continually evolve. As people develop novel leadership attributes, they take on novel roles and capabilities. Traditional top-down leadership shifts to 'guidance' and manifesting an open, collaborative network of people and systems where everyone has the 'ways and means' to contribute on many levels.

*"A true leader creates the stage for others to lead, co-create and self-organize of which is natural for humans. We are all leaders at some point in time."*

(Patrick Trottier, 1974)

- **Becoming Comfortable with The Dynamics of Emergent Change**

An emergent approach to change works naturally 'with-in change as one is a key 'influencer' of the emergence of change itself.' (vs. 'managing change', reacting to change). How an organization works with change is key to an organization's viability, sustainability and vitality - and maybe its very existence.

### **The Law of Emergent Transforming™**

"When one's comfort zone (individual, group, organization) with 'the unknown' is greater than (>) one's comfort zone of 'the known', transformation occurs naturally." (Patrick Trottier, 2013)

From such, natural curiosity, exploration, experimentation, imagination, openness, inquiry, meaningful dialogue / conversations, trust, shifts in mental and emotional frameworks, and the emergence of newness and novel 'frameworks' (thoughts, beliefs, concepts, perceptions, behaviours, actions, relationships, decision-making processes, information processing) occur naturally and in real time. Thus, 'change' becomes natural and does not become just not another 'project', 'program' or 'task'. Through 're-framing how we see things', a shift in how we see ourselves, others and our worlds occur, thus also manifesting what we create.

Such also takes different ways of thinking, such as 'systems thinking'. Systems thinking is based on the idea that all key systems and processes in an organization are interrelated. A system is a set of functions that work together as a whole to achieve a common, defined outcome, or an ongoing developmental process. A system is greater than the sum of its constituent functions because the relationship between the different functions adds value to the system. The definition of systems thinking states that it is a cohesive approach that views all 'functions, processes and systems as parts of an overall whole, rather than in isolation or as segments. (a gestalt) We propose that a 'systems thinking perspective' applies to how we 'see' a person also as a whole person, not 'parts' in isolation, or in segments.

*"Change' is natural to humans.*

*It is 'how we go about change' is the key" (Patrick Trottier, 1978)*

- **Creating an Organizational Culture which focuses on openness and co-creation**

"Organizational culture is the influencing patterns that people consistently and congruently experience over time which then emerges as the norms, beliefs, values, and practices that guide people and their perspectives, attitudes, decisions, and behavior in present time." (Patrick Trottier, 2013).

People are 'experiential by nature. If you want to change the culture, give people 'novel experiences' which are congruent and consistent with the desired culture, and over time the desired culture will be 'formed'. With such, people experience novel experiences that manifest new norms, new behaviors, new perspectives, new ways of doing things. The culture continually emerges to the changing social, generational, and organizational patterns over time especially in our rapid changing environments.

- **A Living Culture™**

A living culture continually emerges with the changing values and principles of social change. Either you are living it, and experiencing it, or it does not exist. When others have 'experiences' consistently and congruently with a desired culture, it lives and new norms, attitudes and behaviors are formed over time. It is the 'human experience' that makes it live.

- **A Living Vision™**

Live your vision, make it happen now - the past and future do not exist. A living vision shifts as the 'influencers', norms and values of its environments shift. As with a Living Culture, either you are living it, and other are experiencing it, thus they also are living it, or it does not exist. It is the 'human experience' that makes it live.

- **Integrated, Strategic Focus and Organization Alignment as a whole organization including internal and external associates.**

Every level / department / function of an organization creates their strategic focus and operational 'ways and means' to align with the overall corporate focus. This develops 'ownership', 'readiness' and 'effective engagement'. Information from the whole organization as well as its external environments constantly re-aligns the strategic and operational focus throughout the organization. This is an open system shared by the whole organization - is a human factor of capability, co-creation, self-organization and collaboration amongst people. There is nothing like a person experiencing their contribution and experiencing success - it manifests a healthy emotional and cognitive sense of ability, contribution, and a sense of belonging.

- **The Business Purpose and A 'Higher Purpose'.**

Simply, an organization's business purpose' is the reason the business exists, its viability and value within its markets / environments. With those thoughts the business model also explores how people will work together, what values and norms are critical to establish, and what organizational design will manifest such. Within the process of creating the business purpose, open dialogue and exploration allows for a greater understanding of how people, systems and technology can come together to co-create contributions to such.

A 'Higher Purpose' is what that organization wants to influence and to create with people throughout the whole organization, its community, its society and maybe even to the planet itself as a continuous, emerging process.

The business model and purpose manifests your 'higher purpose'. Your higher purpose manifests the 'systemic well-being' of humans, community, society and our planet'. A traditional 'mission' has a beginning and an end. A 'Purpose / Higher Purpose' emergent process does not - it lives, emerges and evolves with the changes and complexities of its internal and external environments.

*"The Business Purpose allows the organization and its people to co-achieve its Higher Purpose." (Patrick Trottier, 2018)*

- **Novel Organizational Forms**

We use the word 'form' which is constancy re-shaping aligned to environments of rapid change and greater complexities, rather than 'structure' which is more static and permanent. The 'form' of an organization varies from the 19th Century Industrial Age hierarchical silos which manifests something much different from an interconnected, collaborative network organization which manifests self-agency, open systems and self-organizing capabilities. Often times, the actual form of an organization does not emit, or manifest, its desired purpose but does emit its actual purpose. Most traditional organizational structures actually inhibit performance, innovation, achievement and the optimal capabilities of people although Sr. Management states they desire such.

As an example, a hierarchical form, inherent within itself, has a purpose of control and predictability (actual purpose) although the 'desired purpose' may call for adaptability, innovation and natural, fluid, emergent change simply because the organization is vesseled in environments that call forth constant, changing patterns. Obviously, the organizational form (actual purpose) does not 'fit' with its complex and rapidly changing internal and/or external environments.

With people, within a hierarchy, the only way to flourish is to 'go up' the pyramid into another 'box'. The higher you go to gain influence and a greater sense of capability is moving into another 'box'. The thing is as you go up to increase one's influence and capability the less 'boxes' there are. This in itself stifles and limits the individual, and the organization from expanding capabilities. Such inhibitors lie within the form of an organization itself. These are other forms of organizations that do not impede the manifestation of natural individual and organizational capabilities.

- **Self-Agency, Co-creation, And Self-Organizing Capabilities**

This is about finding your voice and being engaged in an environment to speak your voice, to be recognized and to enhance your 'sphere of influence' in relationships and the 'ways and means' of the 'what' and the 'how' of accomplishments and experiencing 'success'. To gather together as adults to form innovative and novel 'ways and means' of accomplishment, of appreciation of each other as people, to create new ways of working together, generating value for people, the whole organization (internal and external), and its environments.

Maybe to have true innovation, new ways of doing things, sustainability, a human workplace, it is time to get rid of the traditional 'parent-child' / manage and control traditional hierarchical paradigms of organizations.

- **Generative Dialogue**

Manifesting novel human connection and human relationships. To co-create new understanding about people and things. "Generative Dialogue manifests the appreciation of BEing human in oneself, and in others..." (Patrick Trottier, 1988)

*"In skillful discussion, you make a choice; in a dialogue, you discover the nature of choice."*

(William Isaacs, The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook, 1994)

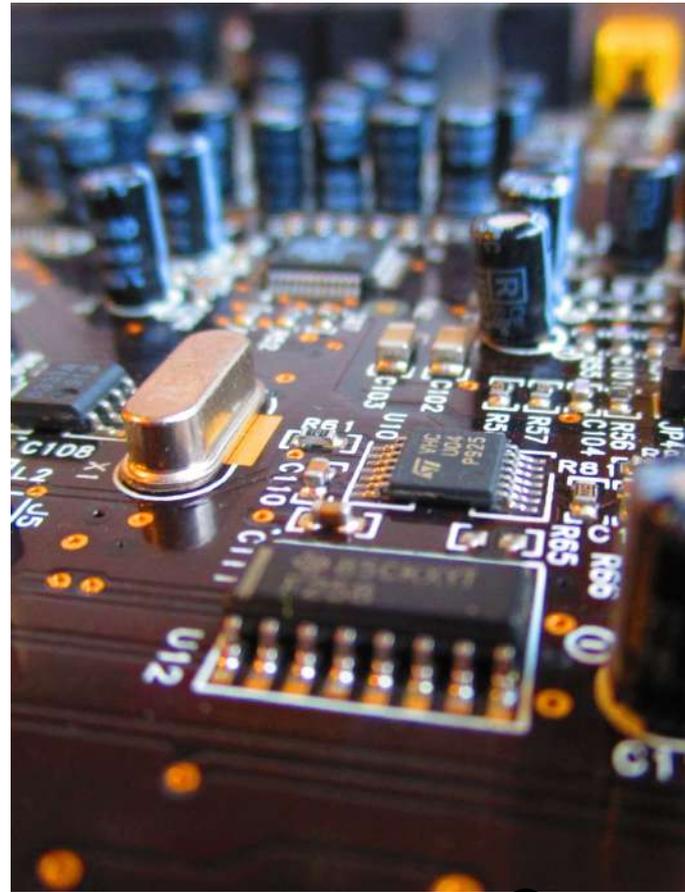
- Using Technology to Humanize the Workplace - Infohumanics TM

“Any IT/IS/AI information technology systems and processes designed to support, augment and facilitate human information processing and the human experience. Marked by humanistic values, and a devotion to human and our planet’s wellbeing. Human-centered and performance centered.” (Patrick Trottier, 2013).

‘Open information systems create a network of collaboration that helps people throughout an organization to make effective strategies, decisions and to effectively implement of those decisions, especially with continuous performance ‘feedback loops’ in control of the people actually implementing the work. A hierarchical control in managing information systems inhibits understanding, self-organizing and collaboration, reinforces the concepts of the Lords and the Serfs, and continually manifest ‘the Parent - Child syndrome’ (Patrick Trottier, 2014). Open information systems manifesting self-agency, self-organizing, collaborative capabilities and emergent learning systems and processes vs. closed command and control systems and processes, and the inhibition of continuous learning.

- Emergent Learning

Creating learning systems and processes that fit individual learning patterns in real time. (vs. traditional classroom teaching) Creating self-managing performance, open feedback systems that manifest self-agency and self-organizing capabilities. Learn from many sources in real time to continually bring one’s abilities and contribution to the workplace and be recognized for such.



- Fair rewards and compensation.

Can the people at the top be successful without the people at the bottom? Recognition and reward systems as well as compensation formulas must reward people in a fair and just manner so they can live a life that is safe, secure and a standard of living that supports a healthy home environment. Also, in line with Kurt Lewin’s Field Theory, if the work environment inhibits effective performance in the many ways it does under traditional forms of hierarchical structures, then compensation based on ‘performance’ is not a fair playing field. Not to mention the ‘gap’ between Sr. management and the average non-management worker, of which Sr. Mgt could not be successful without.



## ***2.5 Creating an Organizational Culture which focuses on openness and co-creation***

Organizations need to appreciate that humanizing a workplace is not a weakness, but a strength. It works and 'it makes good business sense'. There is need to help leaders reframe their mindsets and let people be people and unleash the potential that is in them. This can only happen when people feel recognized as individuals, as human beings.

Other facets that need consideration in humanizing the workplace include:

- Transparency – most organizations struggle to be transparent to employees or to other stakeholders. It's unfortunate that what most people are paid in organizations cannot take them for a week, and as such they have to find other ways and means to survive or meet-up.
- Trust – people need to be able to trust their leaders; leaders need to trust their people
- 

As long as we focus on competition, we are missing out. We expend so much energy on something that is not enough. There is enough for everyone if we shift our focus towards co-creation, Distinctive Uniqueness, and individual greatness.

Openness is about open-mindedness, listening, hearing people out, encouraging, sharing, not punishing.

Curiosity is an essential leadership trait and an essential trait for everybody. The focus should be on together rather than against each other.



**For a novel perspective on organizational culture:**

“Organizational culture is the “influencing patterns that people consistently and congruently experience over time which then emerges as norms, beliefs, values, and practices that guide people and their perspectives, attitudes, decisions, and behavior in present time.”  
(Patrick Trottier, 2013)

In line with the above, a unique perspective is proposed different than the traditional concepts and writings on organizational culture which is a ‘Living Culture’™. With such, people experience novel experiences that manifest new norms, new behaviors, new perspectives, new ways of doing things. The culture continually emerges to the changing social, generational, and organizational patterns over time especially in our rapid changing environments (Patrick Trottier, 2013).

Organizations should focus on creating Living Culture™ so people experience novel experiences that start to develop new norms, new behaviors, new perspectives, new ways of doing and things. Organizational culture is the “influencing patterns that people consistently and congruently experience over time which then emerges as norms, beliefs, values, and practices that guide people and their perspectives, attitudes, decisions, and behavior in present time”  
(Patrick Trottier).

Co-creation is critical because it manifests the concept of ‘Self-Agency’ (Patrick Trottier, 2013) so people realize they can influence their workplace, they have influence in their lives, can speak up as they have a voice. This is manifested within and through their experiences which is called a culture, as well as practices, policies, and behaviors of others. It creates the degree of self-organizing systems, and collaboration.

## **2.6 Using Technology to Humanize the Workplace**

### **Infohumanics™**

Any IT/IS/AI information technology systems and processes designed to support, augment and facilitate human information processing and the human experience. Marked by humanistic values, and a devotion to human and our planet's wellbeing. Human-centered and performance centered (Patrick Trottier, 2013).

Technology is a critical factor and it will continue to be in the future. Countries, governments, communities, organizations, and people work using information. It's time to open up information systems so people can self-manage, self-organize. Information is the key in any performance system and to allow people to develop and utilize their full capabilities to achieve and experience success.

'Open information systems create a network of information that helps people throughout an organization to make effective strategies, decisions and to effectively implement of those decisions, especially with continuous performance 'feedback loops' in control of the people actually implementing the work. A hierarchical control in managing information systems inhibits understanding, self-organizing and collaboration, reinforces the concepts of the Lords and the Serfs, and continually manifest 'the Parent - Child syndrome' (Patrick Trottier, 2014).

## **2.7 Deconstruction of Hierarchies to Humanize Workplaces**

The age of industrial hierarchies has been around since the 1890s (Scientific Management) and is still dominant today. Hierarchies cannot significantly humanize workplaces because of their design and structure. What can humanize workplaces? Changing mindsets and changing the form of organizations. It's time to move into the age of collaborative networks and design organizations around that so people can talk to people, and so people can be people. It's time to get rid of the hierarchy.

"It is time to 'shift' the hierarchy into novel organizational 'forms' such as moving from industrial age hierarchical silos into the interconnected age of collaborative networks as is more natural to human nature and the manifestation of human capabilities." (Patrick Trottier, 2003).

Organizations love hierarchies and most societies in Africa are extremely hierarchical. Therefore, it could take a long time to get rid of hierarchical structures. Humanizing the workplace is one way of reducing or getting rid of hierarchies. This requires a realization of our humanness and the role of conversations (dialogue) in our development. Conversations help to do away with hierarchies. Unfortunately, titles are used to reinforce hierarchies in organizations.

It is important to embed human-centered values in the fabric of the organization.

Leaders need to be observant and determine elements of the organizational structure that they need to keep and elements they need to get rid of.

The bottom line is to start seeing people more than titles, seeing them more than structures, and starting to see people as humans. To remove hierarchies, organizations must view people as equal contributors to the organization's results.

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## 2.8 Flexibility & Commitment in Humanizing the Workplace

Flexibility means a lot of different things. Flexible work schedules are great because they are more results-oriented. Project-related jobs require flexibility because they don't need to be tied to a specific schedule. What matters the most are deadlines, results, and expected outcomes once the task is finished. This is more of an entrepreneurial mindset what counts is the outcome and not the hours worked. For any type of flexibility, a mindset shift is required. Leaders must lay out clear expectations rather than micro-manage every single employee. Leaders no longer need to have so much authority to dictate the rules but lays out what is expected and give room for employees to execute. In the beginning, clear expectations should be supported by detailed instructions but once the process works the instructions are no longer necessary. This gives team leaders the opportunity to move from a more authoritative role to more of a coach role.

The employees' mindset needs to be one of self-responsibility. Self-responsible employees focus on results, outcomes, and how their work fits into the bigger picture of the team's work. They are productive and enjoy their work. Trust is the basis for all this to function smoothly.

People are multi-dimensional in their capabilities and the workplaces are very narrow aspect of those capabilities.



People have a lot of capabilities and responsibilities that they take outside of the boxes they are put in through hierarchical structures. Hence, there are many capabilities that organizations do not attend to and that dehumanizes people. People become task masters when they are put in hierarchical boxes, and labels of status, positions, and hierarchies.

Organizational Design is also a key component in facilitating flexibility. How does an organizational design manifest desired capabilities and responsibilities? How does it manifest the human spirit, relationships, open communication? In most organizations there are closed systems that closes out the humanity of the people.



# G R O W T H

How do we develop open systems, open forms in organizations so that we can bring out and explore?

This again, leads to self-organization and self-agency. Organizations have created very limited space for people to be people. Open systems create an infinity of space to explore and that's natural to humans – it brings out our natural capabilities, not just our technical skills of which we are usually bounded by and labelled by. This takes courage of the people that run organizations, the courage to be humans again, start exploring and/or going into the unknown – that's very natural for people. It's that naturalism that makes people human and organizations need to be open systems. People really need to experience success and when people are task masters in boxes, they don't really experience success because of lack of connection to the higher purpose. People don't know how they contribute to the big picture – they just go through the routine of work to get a paycheck.

There are three pillars that are important in this aspect:

- Trust
- Self-responsibility
- Accountability
- Courage

Relationships within any organization are the glue that bonds these three pillars together and enhances them. The relationships will be supported by communication and decision making. Flexible work environments create a workplace where humans are working as humans. In most cases employees are flexible in executing activities outside the hierarchical boxes yet employers are predominantly not flexible to support staff. Flexible work environment that fosters humanity is where people understand that humans have values. These issues have a lot to do with mindsets. If our mindsets are so rigid and we are not ready to change then flexible work environments cannot be possible.

What are the things that inhibit the manifestation of flexible workplaces? Most of the inhibitors makes people feel safe.

## 2.9 The Values-gap and Humanizing the Workplace

There is always a gap between personal values and corporate values. This conflict creates stress, when this stress hits a tipping point it impacts decision making. Stress facilitates concrete decision making rather than good thinking and good decisions. Creating congruency between personal and institutional values creates magical display of what can be done based on our thinking, decision making, and new experiences within organizations.

We are in the age of chaos, complexity, and rapid change; so, when operating with a closed mindset we make decisions based on traditional experiences rather than exploring new experiences through open thinking or exploratory thinking.





## Proper Connections between People in the Workplace

Organizations need to leverage on the benefits of co-creation rather than competition. People should be productive at workplace and most importantly have fun at work. Competition is working against each other, wasting precious energy. Co-creation is working together to create something bigger and accomplish more.

Co-creation is far more fruitful than competition, yet we have been educated so much into competition because it serves the system. How much energy and time is wasted on competition and the conflicts that arise from it? How much energy is expended on the illusion that there is not enough? That's the underlying illusion. We waste precious energy that could be used much more productively if we just allow our employees to bring out their best selves, to show their most creative abilities, to show more of their unique potential which could be used for the benefit of the team. Humans are not production machines; they are humans and we need to offer them workplaces that are humane.

If team leaders and all employees were more aware of their energy, if they learnt how to manage their energy; this could reduce stress and therefore conflict, burnout, sickness. It would improve their wellness, their job satisfaction, their business and meetings presences. If people were trained to tap into their inner power, their inner power energy the mindset that I am enough, they wouldn't feel that need to exert power over others. There will be functional flatter organizations with no need for positional authority with the right mindset and the right energy management.

Instead, companies focus on training and time management when time cannot even be managed anyway – people can manage resources and priorities and not time. Time doesn't care if you are managing it or not, so why do we put so much focus on it. Why not manage our energy and upgrade our energy? Time management is an alienation tool and it takes us away from being human. There is need for more co-creation of workplaces that are humane, workplaces that we can build relationships, create connections, be understood, accepted, and welcomed. Tools that can accomplish that include story-sharing and relationship building.

- Story-sharing and not story-telling. Stories have a lot of benefits, they connect, reduces the risks of stereotyping as we get to know the person, increase cultural sensitivity and awareness, dispel myths, diminishes suspicion, increase trust and mutual understanding, bond the team together as mutual understanding increases. We can also inspire and encourage others through our stories. We can learn more about an individual and this can help us adapt job descriptions so they can make more substantial contribution that's aligned with their talents and skills, their specific Distinctive Uniqueness, and also with their career aspirations. Story-sharing puts people out of their boxes and into their humanness.
- Relationships is everything – it creates the ways and means thereby building the culture. Culture is a result of the trust. Organizations need to create the relationships and the culture will form; new experiences will emerge.

## 2.10 Humanizing Leadership

How can employees help humanize leadership? In most cases leaders are viewed as semi-gods rather than people. A change in mindset is essential for staff to start viewing leaders as people too. Staff need to be empowered to start interacting with leadership and asking questions – turning the hierarchy upside down. Staff should take responsibility to build relationship with leadership.

It is important to reflect on who we hire as leaders and who we hire as employees. In both cases it is important to not overly rely on technical skills but integrate co-creation and interpersonal skills such as listening. In hiring, organizations need to appreciate the different personality types as some people are more people oriented while some are more task-oriented. Personality tests help us find out more about ourselves. These personality tests should not be used to put people in boxes but as self-discovery tools. Organizational values should also be reflected in choosing the candidates as an approach to avoid too much friction or value-conflict. Organizations should hire leaders with a certain attitude for specific positions. Hire people with different perspectives. This is very enriching and can benefit in products and innovation. Interpersonal skills and attitude are key in all positions.

Leaders must interrogate their inner space to see why they are getting results they don't want. In most cases it's because you are forgetting to create an environment where each person begins to interrogate their own inner space. If we can connect at that level, we will do great work together.

Leadership is a human activity, without human interaction there is no leadership. The ingredient of dignity in the workplace is fundamental. Leaders should bring their best to the workplace, rather than pretending to be something else.

Leadership must be put in its right perspective, especially today. There was a time when leadership was about dominance of an individual, that is very unproductive. Leadership should interact with the workforce.



## 2.11 Dealing with Nepotism and Favoritism

The objective should be to neutralize nepotism and favoritism in organizations. To do that we propose the following:

- A fair playing field should be created. This involves creating a process that everybody goes through. A system based on the Balanced Scorecard should be created to align and co-create. Work with departments to align with their expectations. Qualitative and quantitative dimensions and attributes need to be developed, both functional and interpersonal skills aligned to the business objectives, organizational purpose, values, and the cultural attributes.
- HR usually creates a shortlist around technical skills but integrate relationship and performance attributes.
- Departments and teams should identify candidates, make the hiring, and make the choice NOT HR. This helps the team to develop ownership in that person thereby helping and supporting the person to be successful and to experience success. The team should design the questions and make the choice. The department and the team play a major role in the hiring process rather than the leader picking who he or she likes.

Co-creation is the future. It brings us more job satisfaction, more wealth for all, it has a positive impact on the bottom-line in the medium to long-term. The old paradigm of competition is based on scarcity thinking while co-creation is based on abundance thinking. Co-creation is based on I see you. I see you with your unlimited potential and I allow you to show us that potential. If humanity wants to advance, a big piece of that is leadership need to shift from leadership of others to self-leadership. The time we are in is asking us to recognize our self-leadership potential. To stand in our sovereignty, and to lead ourselves both in the workplace and in all areas of life.



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Please look out for more transformative engagements from us.

# HUMANIZING THE WORKPLACE



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