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By Rick Boxx

THE IMPORTANCE OF A UNIQUE MISSION

When you go to work, does having a sense of mission – an underlying purpose – factor into how much you enjoy what you do? An article in Wall Street Journal, a respected business periodical, discussed the increasing focus corporations are now putting on their employees' need for a sense of purpose in their work. For many of them, having a job to perform and earning a regular paycheck is not sufficient – they also want to feel their work has deeper meaning.

This concern is shared by many people as they evaluate their investment options. For instance, Factiva, an online business information and research tool, discovered the words "mission" "higher purpose," or "changing the world" were discussed 3,243 times by investors with their financial advisors on recorded phone calls in 2014, compared to only 2,318 times five years before.

One reason for this significant surge in interest is generational. There is a strong emphasis among many men and women in the so-called “millennial generation” who want to work somewhere that is making a difference in the world. They want their vocations – and the companies that employ them – to contribute positively to people that use their products and services, communities where they are located, and to the world at large.

Many businesses and organizations already have statements of mission, vision and values, so they can readily address the desire for a greater purpose that many of their workers and prospective employees have. A well-articulated mission statement helps an individual to quickly discern whether a company’s overriding purpose and their own are in alignment.

For those of us that see our work as an expression of our spiritual convictions, this also makes a lot of sense. The Bible teaches vocational pursuits are part of God’s calling and His plan for us to participate in His creation constructively. **"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10)**. In other words, the gifts and talents we possess are not arbitrary, but divinely given for us to participate in God’s work locally and globally.

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As employers, executives and managers, one of the ways we can best serve those working under our direction is to communicate how much we value the ways God has designed them and our business for His unique purposes. This can also serve as a good recruiting tool, showing job seekers that the company has an understanding of its role in society and how individual members of the team can contribute toward achieving that purpose.

People who find meaning in their work and pursue excellence in all they do typically find their jobs more fulfilling and rewarding, and not just in terms of compensation. And that dedication deserves genuine recognition and appreciation. As **Proverbs 22:29 states, "Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men."**

When workers feel they are "on a mission," undertaking tasks and responsibilities that transcend mere deadlines and quotas, they become inspired, highly motivated and more productive. The company benefits as well, making it a win-win situation for everyone.

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Do you have a sense of mission when you go to work, beyond earning a paycheck so you can pursue the lifestyle of your choice? If so, how would you define that mission?

2. Have you ever worked for a company with a clearly expressed statement of mission, vision or values? Perhaps the enterprise you work for right now has one. How does knowing

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the organization's mission help you determine your own mission, personally as well as professionally?

3. The Bible states, "we are God's handiwork, His workmanship...created for good works" that He has determined for us in advance. Do you believe this? If so, what does this mean for you in terms of your work day to day?

4. Why do you think an increasing number of people want to approach their work with a specific sense of mission? Is this always a good thing, in your opinion? Explain your answer.

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Ecclesiastes 2:24-26; Matthew 6:25-34; Colossians 3:2,16-17,23; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

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