

Disconnected  
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Veracorp LLC

Recently I read a pharmaceutical client's quarterly newsletter and learned that they hired a consulting firm to bring about a culture shift in the way the business operates. Evidently the 16-20 on-site associates helped create a new mission statement and implement a program to improve the company that I will vicariously title "Give and Go". The purpose of the program was to challenge employees to accomplish great results by connecting with others. All employees received a Give and Go card to place behind their ID badges; framed artwork depicting the slogan was displayed throughout the facility. I suppose the 16-20 consultants who were around for nine months cost the company somewhere around \$3MM. Curiously in the short time I was there I noticed something rather strange: the floor workers didn't have a clue about the program and, more importantly, they didn't care about doing anything great.

All they wanted to do was finish their work and go home.

So what happened? Why was there a disconnect between the expectations of the costly program and the actual results that ensued? I would like to hear some of your answers and will publish them in the next newsletter.

In the meantime, my theory is that the program was concocted for the purpose of simply "doing something" to improve efficiency and morale; there was a disconnect between what was important to the management team and what was important to the workers. During my career I have witnessed similar programs where companies spent exorbitant sums on projects that sounded good, were generated by highly visible consulting firms, played well in the press but were ultimately doomed to fail. The projects failed because they lacked substance and visceral commitment by the executives, which was readily discerned by employees who had to execute the programs.

A successful program is one that starts with a meaningful mission statement. For example, Merck's mission statement is "To preserve and improve human life" ([www.businessplans.org/Mission.html](http://www.businessplans.org/Mission.html)). If this statement was used in my client's company there would be no need to develop any other program since the statement is all inclusive. Once fully embraced, everybody in the company, from the CEO to the person cleaning floors, would ask themselves before making final decisions or performing their tasks "Am I doing this activity in a manner that is preserving and improving human life?" If the answer is no, they would need to alter their behavior; if the answer is yes, they would be doing the right thing.

Teaching companies how to get to this stage is easy and in the next newsletter I will describe processes that enable everyone within a company to embrace the mission statement and use it to make their company the best there.