

# July 2007, Inspirational Leadership

While good leaders who initiate structure and show consideration are typically successful, innovative leaders can take organizations to new heights.

In a recent article, which appeared in *Bizmanualz*, the on-line magazine, a profile of Robert Chapman, CEO of Barry-Wehmiller, the largest packaging and automation company in North America with revenues over \$900 million, illustrates this point.

Envision a CEO who has led an organization to 19 consecutive years of 20% compound growth in revenue and share value. Do you picture a ruthless cost-cutter slashing budgets and jobs, consolidating operations, restructuring and over-burdening stressed-out employees? Now, imagine the opposite of that and you have Mr. Chapman. During the two decades of achieving this growth, Mr. Chapman has focused on the challenge of creating and sustaining an environment that brings out the best in people. This is a goal Barry-Wehmiller calls "Achieving Principled Results on Purpose."

Mr. Chapman's experiences have led him to a philosophy of "inspirational leadership." Businesses, he believes, can have a positive and meaningful impact on society through how they engage and enrich their team members. Mr. Chapman has made "We measure success by the way we touch the lives of people" the guiding principle at Barry-Wehmiller, where leadership is about creating meaningful roles so that each associate can use their gifts and talents.

Earlier this year, at an event honoring the top privately held businesses in the St. Louis area, Mr. Chapman delivered the keynote address. Instead of presenting performance results, he posed the following questions to these business leaders: What do you hope to achieve while you are on the face of the earth? What are you going to do to make a difference? How is your leadership role in business allowing you to do that? He went on to give his fellow leaders the following challenge:

"Our problem in America is not our people. It's the lack of inspiration. It's the lack of people feeling fulfilled by what they're doing. We've gotten too disconnected from the way we touch the lives of people. Our promise at Barry-Wehmiller is that if we have 4,100 employees and they each have an average of four people in their families, we've got more than 16,000 people directly impacted by our leadership. It is an awesome responsibility. American business has a profound opportunity to have a sustained positive impact upon our society."

As the first half of 2007 is now in the books, it is an appropriate time to consider Mr. Chapman's words and reflect on how the model of inspirational leadership can positively affect your organization.