

Enhancing Organizational Spirit

By Mark Samuel

When was the last time that you donated your time and energy to assist someone else? Maybe it was to help a child with their homework, or to help someone get to their destination when they were lost, or maybe you volunteered your time to assist the work of a non-profit organization. Do you remember how you felt? Last month, a gentleman sitting next to me on an airplane lent me \$100 when he heard that I forgot my wallet. His unselfish act of kindness inspired me deeply and reaffirmed my faith in humanity.

Spirit is built when people participate together in an activity that helps other people. During the holiday season, many organizations conduct special campaigns to raise money or food for people less fortunate so they can enjoy a nice Christmas. Many times, organizations also involve their employees in drives to collect toys or clothes. These are great events that benefit many people including those that give and those that receive the wonderful gifts. While these events are wonderful, there are other ways to build the spirit of the organization which are both meaningful for people and beneficial to others less fortunate.

While it is nice to contribute to a drive, it can also be somewhat impersonal. One way to enhance the spirit is to involve people in the distribution of their "charity." An organization can include groups of people who together wrap presents and bring them to a children's hospital. This way they can play with the children as well as present them with their new gifts. In this way, the caring and love that each person has gets shared with those of need in addition to receiving their gifts. I've discovered that the employees who get involved in those activities come away feeling as charged by the experience as the children who received the gift of their presence.

Another opportunity to bring employees together at this time is to find employees who want to perform as their gift to others. Some groups get together to perform skits for people in convalescent homes, homes for the aging or hospitals. Others form singing groups, music groups or comedy groups to perform in the same type of places. People especially enjoy the human contact received from these performances, and it gives the employees a chance to gain the satisfaction of sharing their compassion with others.

Another advantage to involving people in sharing themselves with others is that they are also sharing with each other in the process. In other words, the employees who volunteer their time and their talent together develop a special closeness with each other, regardless of their position or function in the organization. True humanness comes out and is expressed.

While the organization can assist building this spirit by coordinating these kind of activities, it can do more. It is a wonderful experience to get those who volunteered to share their experiences with each other. The organization can sponsor a special dinner or event to bring the employee volunteers together and share their performances, and most important, to share their experiences of the people that they touched and who touched them. These experiences are unforgettable and provide a special blessing to all who participated.