The Role of Meaning and Purpose in Business

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Contents

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INTRODUCTION

The role of meaning and purpose in business has evolved and expanded over the past 150 years, continually giving new shape and dimension to the nature of business and work. The four overarching contexts for meaning and purpose in business can be characterized as: *Rationalist, Humanistic, Wholistic* and *Spiritual-based.*

Each context represents an evolution in how the leaders of an organization, as well as employees and stakeholders, create and relate to "meaning and purpose" in business and work. As we embrace and bring forth the wisdom of each of these contexts, we believe it will naturally fuel a fundamental shift of understanding about the *nature of business and work itself*, such that the enterprise of business and the function of work can take its rightful place in helping to evolve and fulfill humanity's purpose.

It's important to note that the four overarching contexts have a nested relationship, such that each includes and respects, yet evolves beyond, the previous one(s). Thus, for example, the Humanistic context includes but goes beyond the Rationalist context. The Spiritual-based context includes the other three,

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One way to understand "meaning and purpose" is to refer to the dictionary definitions. When meaning is viewed as the verb "to mean," it signifies "to have in the mind as a purpose," "to intend," "to show or indicate the importance of." When viewed as a noun, meaning signifies, "the thing one intends to convey especially by language," or "a significant quality." Purpose is complementary to meaning in that it is "something set up as an object or end to be attained; an intention, a resolution, or determination."

While there are many facets that shape "meaning and purpose" in business, we have chosen to focus on how each context has been influenced by diverse cultural perspectives and events and how each has specific organizational drivers for its impact on people and business.

In this paper, we begin with the *Rationalist* and *Humanistic* contexts. We have drawn from American, European and Japanese influences, as these sources have been predominant shapers of today's business practices worldwide. We then articulate what the *Wholistic* and the newly-emerging *Spiritual-based* contexts look like at this time. At the end, we provide a summary table of the key points we have covered, organized by each overarching context.

Each of the contexts – and their corresponding sense of meaning and purpose in business and work – still exists in our business culture today. The *Rationalist* context was once dominant but is now less so, while the *Humanistic* context is in its prime. The *Wholistic* context is now in its early stages of maturity, while the *Spiritual-based* context has newly emerged as a possibility. Within an organization, leaders and employees may embrace and operate from any one of these four contexts, and any single person may operate from a blend of them, especially if they are in a personal transition in their views about the meaning and purpose of work or business. Thus, a range of perspectives on "meaning and purpose" currently co-exist in the world of business today, albeit not always peacefully and amicably.

Understanding these contexts for meaning and purpose can give you insights into many common dynamics in today's business world, such as:
- What motivations or perspectives are operating "beneath the surface" in work discussions?
- What is a path forward for how I can grow personally and professionally?
- How can I engage others in creating a meaningful, united future together?

You can find further information about the scientific, psychological, and business writings that influenced each context, along with the associated business leadership practices, in the white paper, "Four Contexts of Business Leadership Shaping the 21st Century."[1]

The overall aim of this white paper is to evoke deeper perspectives, insights and conversation about the meaning and purpose of business over the past 150 years. It is not intended to be the "end all" to the conversation. For us, this is an "opening" rather than a definitive statement about the way things are. As such, we conclude a set of inquiry questions at the end to further promote this aim.

MEANING AND PURPOSE IN EACH CONTEXT

Meaning and Purpose in the *Rationalist* Context for Business

The *Rationalist* context arose in the midst of the Industrial Revolution and took shape over 150 years ago. Its worldview is based on the mechanistic science of Sir Isaac Newton and Charles Darwin, the psychology of Sigmund Freud and B. F. Skinner, and business writings of Adam Smith and Fredrick Taylor. This context views life in mechanistic and paternalistic terms, and aims to "rise to the top" through competition, power and control. The goal of business is wealth-creation on behalf of the owners. A quote that typifies this context is from industrialist Andrew Carnegie:

> *While the law of competition may sometimes be hard for the individual, it is best for the race because it ensures the survival of the fittest in every department. Immense power is acquired by assuring yourself that you were born to control affairs.*

While there are many disciplines that helped to shape this Rationalist context, this paper focuses on the influence that culturally-based work ethics have had. The two most prominent and influential cultures that contributed to this context were the Euro-American cultures and the Japanese culture. Both had a religious background for a work ethic based on discipline and hard work. Both had an emphasis on economic strength and competitiveness, though with quite different strategic aims: Euro-American cultures focused their attention more on the strength of individual interests than on the collective; yet typical of Asian cultures, the Japanese focused more on the strength and well-being of the collective than of the individual.[2]

Both cultures have contributed to this context's dominance of business thought and practice between the mid-1800s to mid-1900s. We shall first examine the cultural influences from the Euro-American perspective, and then turn our attention to the Japanese perspectives. The themes that best describe meaning and purpose in this context are: *economic strength* and *discipline*.

Cultural influences

Euro-American industrialization and the discipline of the Protestant work ethic

In the mid-19th century, American and European business was headed for a dramatic shift into the Industrial Era, fueled by what Max Weber, a German economic sociologist, termed the "Protestant work ethic." He identified the key elements of this Protestant work ethic as diligence, punctuality, deferment of gratification and primacy of the work domain.[3] D. T. Rodgers wrote in his book *The Work*

Ethic in Industrial America, 1850-1920[4] that at that time "economists warned of the poverty and decay that would befall the country if people failed to work hard, and moralists stressed the social duty of each person to be productive."

Given these strong attitudes toward work, which have now been prevalent for over 5 generations, it is hard to believe that work has not always been the centerpiece of life as it has become. Roger Hill, Ph.D. portrayed the history of work in his research paper "Historical Context of the Work Ethic".[5] A brief excerpt follows:

> *In the Classical Period [before c400 AD], the Greeks, like the Hebrews, regarded work as a curse.[6] Manual labor was for slaves. Mental labor was also considered to be work and was denounced by the Greeks. Skilled crafts were accepted and recognized as having some social value… Hard work, whether due to economic need or under the orders of a master, was disdained. The Romans adopted much of their belief system from the culture of the Greeks and they also held manual labor in low regard.[7] Although work was something that would degrade virtue, wealth was not directly related to virtue except in the matter of how it was used.*
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> *[During] the Middle Ages (c400 AD until c1400 AD)... Christian thought dominated the culture of Europe.[8] Work was still perceived [by Christians] as punishment by God for man's original sin…[9] Wealth was recognized as an opportunity to share with those who might be less fortunate and work which produced wealth therefore became acceptable. As was the case for the Greeks and the Romans, social status within the medieval culture was related to the work a person did. Agriculture was ranked first, followed by the handicrafts and then commerce. These were considered to be the work of the world, however, and the work of the church was in a higher category.[10]*
>
> *With the [Protestant] Reformation… came a new perspective on work. The norms regarding work… [were] based on the combined theological teachings of Luther and Calvin, encouraged work in a chosen occupation with an attitude of service to God, [and] viewed work as a calling… [These norms] approved of working diligently to achieve maximum profits, required reinvestment of profits back into one's business, allowed a person to change from the craft or profession of his father, and associated success in one's work with the likelihood of being one of God's Elect.*

Roger Hill further explains that during the early years of the industrial revolution, "the idea of work as a calling had been replaced by the concept of public usefulness." The Protestant work ethic provided the much needed human fuel to launch the Industrial Era in the West, with all of its technical advances in machinery and production.

While the driver of meaning for an individual worker was founded in the discipline of the Protestant work ethic, by the mid-1800s the term "work ethic" had shed its religious connotation and was now a

secularized construct associated with business. As an intrinsic motivator, work ethic provided a cultural norm that advocated being personally accountable and responsible for your work. As an extrinsic motivator, work ethic became a business norm for finding good employees. Several work ethic scales have been developed over the years and some are still popular today. One of the most recently developed scales in the early 1990s was the Occupational Work Ethic Inventory (OWEI), developed by an academic, Gregory Petty, Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee. The OWEI scale has 3 major factors: interpersonal skills, initiative and being dependable.

During this period between the mid 1800s and mid 1900s, business schools became widely established in Europe and the USA. Before this context began in the mid 1800s, there were only two university institutions that taught modern business disciplines: the Aula do Comércio in Lisbon was the first institution to specialize in the teaching of commerce back in 1759; and the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce of Paris was the oldest business school in the world (started in 1819). Between 1881 and 1920, nine major universities began their first business schools, MBA and Ph.D. programs. Wharton established the first private business school in the USA in 1881 and the University of Berkeley California started the first public business school in 1898. MBA programs began in the early 1900s at Dartmouth College and Harvard Business School, and the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business was the first to start an Executive MBA program in 1920.[11]

With this new infusion of academic thought, our modern organizational theory began to take hold. Max Weber, the German economic sociologist, who was noted earlier for coining the phrase "Protestant work ethic," believed the ideal organization should be run as a bureaucracy, staffed by bureaucrats. In his idealized organizational structure, which was prominently adopted during this context, he propounded that responsibilities for workers should be clearly defined and behavior tightly controlled by rules, policies and procedures.[12]

However, one of the basic Protestant work ethic tenants – that one could be his own master through hard work – actually began to break down as workers moved to the factories. Hill states in his research, "in the factories, skill and craftsmanship were replaced by discipline and anonymity…The factory system did little to support a sense of purpose or self-fulfillment for those who were on the assembly lines."

The ultimate result of this change in meaning and purpose for the factory workers, which by the turn of the 20th century constituted a significant amount of the USA and European workers, was best described by Douglas McGregor when he defined Theory X, in contrast to Theory Y in his book, *The Human Side of Enterprise*, first published in 1960.[13] McGregor characterized management's view of employees of this era as "preferring to be directed, wanting to avoid responsibility, and cherishing financial security above all else."

Despite the economic progress brought about by the industrial revolution, severe labor/management conflicts arose, along with employee apathy, boredom, and wasted human resources, thus spurring

an unprecedented growth in labor unions. One of the primary critics of the time, Elton Mayo, a Harvard University researcher, claimed that this "alienation" stemmed from the breakdown of the social structures caused by industrialization, the factory system, and its related outcomes like growing urbanization.[14]

Japanese industrialization and the discipline of the Shinto work ethic

Prior to 1850, Japan had purposely closed itself to relationship and trade with other countries – a period of self-imposed political and economic isolation. By 1856, however, Japan was forced – under military threat by the American commodore Matthew Perry – to receive Western consuls and open ports to foreign trade. After a decade of subsequent political and social unrest, the Meiji Emperor ("Meiji" means "enlightened one") took power and began the period of Japanese industrialization and its rise as a world power.

The Meiji government abolished the feudal[15] economic system, based on ancient clans that ruled large estates, and sent samurai (the warrior aristocracy) overseas to study western political and economic practices. A new constitution was enshrined in 1889, patterned on German models, with voting rights based on property ownership. This mixing of business people with the political elite was a new development.

A Ministry of Industry was established in 1870 to supervise economic development, and the government built modern factories to spur new growth. Clear title to land ownership was granted, and industrial combines -- conglomerates of associated companies – called "zaibatsu" were set up for capital accumulation. Zaibatsu literally means "financial cliques" – in fact, they were often managed like clans – and they grew to incredible size and influence in the Japanese economy.[16]

A broader education system was introduced to build a more capable workforce. A hybrid of imported European and indigenous Japanese technologies arose in factory systems, which still incorporated traditional methods of organizing and managing a labor force, based in part on long-standing trade associations and labor patterns. As noted in a Harvard Business School review of the book, *The Role of Tradition in Japan's Industrialization,* "Industrial modernization, through the absorption of Western technologies, was influenced by traditional or indigenous factors. Traditional systems of organization and production remained strong, despite the expansion of modern, Western-style factories that catered to the export market."[17]

The Meiji government also made the ancient Shintoism the state religion and took steps to purge it of Confucian and Buddhist influences that had arisen since the 6th century – though this "purification" lasted only a short time before those influences again arose in popular worship.

Shinto's ideal is harmony with life and nature, and a steadfast loyalty to one's ancestors and family. In the context of maintaining harmony within a fast growing population on the small Japanese islands,

Shintoism espoused noble virtues such as unyielding respect for elders and superiors, obedience, piety, loyalty, self-control, and kindness. To go against these values was to tempt fate against not only oneself but also the entire community. This set of values also led to a strong vertical structure for society and any business operating within it.

Thus arose a Shinto work ethic comparable in discipline to the West's Protestant work ethic. As explained by historian Kuroda Toshio, Shinto had arisen to be "the cultural will or energy of the Japanese people, embodied in conventions that precede or transcend religion."[18] The importance of working hard, with obedience to authority, became a shared value of East and West that spurred industrialization in both economies.

However, that common work ethic was focused on two different forms of "economic strength."

<u>The Euro-American and Japanese definitions of "economic strength"</u>

The contrast between Euro-American and Japanese notions about success in life and business help us to understand how each would define "economic strength" in very different terms. In the Euro-American cultures, quality of life for all members of society is seen as directly dependent on opportunities for individual freedom and development; community is judged by the extent to which it serves the interest of individual members. It's the person's responsibility to first take care of his or herself and his or her immediate family; society will end up benefiting overall.

For Japan, quality of life for the individual is seen as directly dependent upon taking care of his fellow man, even at the cost of individual freedom. The individual is judged by the extent to which he serves the interest of the community. It's the person's responsibility to first serve society; by doing so, individual needs will be taken care of naturally.
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Therefore, in the Euro-American Industrial Era, the meaning and purpose of business and work was focused on producing wealth and profit for individual owners or shareholders, while meeting the basic needs of society. This belief in individualism before collectivism – that the gain of individuals would ultimately lead to the prosperity of society as a whole – was a fundamental tenet of Western-style capitalism. In America, this was supported by a belief in "rugged individualism" and the idea that America was big enough for people to pursue happiness as they chose. Thus, "economic strength" for the Euro-American culture was a dedication to strong profits and wealth for the owners of capital and business.

In Japan, the cultural belief was quite different: collectivism came before individualism, such that the gain of the collective community (within a company and for all society) would ultimately lead to the benefit of the individual. In this vein, Shintoism was increasingly used by the Meiji government to raise nationalist sentiments and unify the people behind the government – in part to resist further Western influences even as it studied and selectively integrated Western ways and technologies within its

indigenous culture. This meant that economic strength for the Japanese was first and foremost a nationalist dedication to the long term economic strength of the country; rather than individual wealth for business owners.

In sum, Europeans and Americans were concerned with generating individualized corporate wealth, one company and one set of owners at a time, with an assumed natural benefit to society. The Japanese were concerned with generating collective corporate wealth, on behalf of the collective strength of the nation. In both cases, the idea of economic strength was based on "competitive power over…" For Europeans and Americans it meant power over competitor *companies*. For the Japanese, it meant power over competitor *nations*.

Organizational drivers

In Euro-American countries, the Protestant Reformation had firmly established the norm for creating wealth and maximizing profits through disciplined, hard work. In Japan, Shinto nationalism had also firmly established the norm for building a strong country through dedication and hard work. Organizational drivers and disciplines were put into place in each of these cultures to help businesses fully pursue these aims.

Organizational structure

One organizational discipline common to both East and West was the adoption of a military-style, hierarchical management. This adoption was driven by a common psychology: the perception of a hostile, competitive world. While adopting a military model of management was quite natural, their different aims for "economic strength" drove different survival strategies in Japan and Euro-American companies.

For Euro-American businesses, each was in a "survival of the fittest" combat with all the others. Business was warfare and each company's survival was based on out-competing others. Any attempt at too-close of a collaboration eventually faced anti-trust laws, enacted to keep each company in true competition with others. A strong company was successful in the face of this company-to-company competition.

For Japan, a company was viewed in relation to the *country's* economic strength to survive – underscored by the military threat by Commodore Perry that forced open the doors of Japan to the West in the 1850's. Japanese companies were in business not only to survive as an entity, but more importantly to help the country survive as a nation against foreigners. One strategy they adopted was the formation of "keiretsu" networks, where a large "parent" company formed alliances with smaller companies through various financial ties, long-term relationships, and social/family connections. Each company interlocked their business, fortune, and fate with others in their keiretsu. These bonds involved not only financial resources but human resources as well, so that a "retired" executive from a

parent company might be placed in a respected position in a lower tier company within a keiretsu. This system provided great stability through shared gain and shared risk in economic ups and downs.

Productivity management

In both the Euro-American and Japanese contexts, organizational objectives became the drivers for this *Rationalist* context that dominated business until the mid-1900s. In the Euro-American context, it was a way that the owners of business exercised control over their assets. In Japan, this fit the Shinto ideal perfectly, where employees were expected to have respect and obedience to their superiors. Thus, organizational objectives were typically formulated and exercised in a command-and-control fashion.

In the West, professional accounting skills and techniques rose to the forefront to provide the compass needed to make sure that the purpose of wealth creation and financial stability were being achieved. Accounting has fueled some of the world's oldest and largest professional service firms, and some academics believe that accounting may have given rise to capitalism because it provided a technology that allowed the recognition and monitoring of wealth. The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) was formed in 1887 and the Journal of Accountancy in1905.[19]

Along with accounting, productivity measures also came to the forefront to make sure that all of the organization's employee resources were being used efficiently on behalf of maintaining sound viability and maximizing profits. The "scientific management" that Frederick Taylor developed became a basic operating principle in the West's industrial, machine-intensive businesses. An article titled "The Taylor System" describes Taylor's methodology as:

> The idea that these human activities could be measured, analyzed, and controlled by techniques analogous to those that had been successfully applied to physical objects was the central theme in what Taylor put forth in his theory. Job analysis consisted in breaking each job down into small elements and distinguishing those elements that were essential for the performance of work from those that were superfluous, or waste.[20]

In Japan, the Meiji government studied 19th century Western factory management, but it was more the cultural Shinto values that drove management methods. The values of respect for superiors, obedience, self-control, and loyalty were the basis for productivity management; any Western accounting and "scientific" methods were adopted on top of this foundation. To violate these principles was akin to wishing ruin on the business.

Thus, in both cultural contexts, while the business compass was based on accounting and productivity methods, the individual's compass was based on a strong sense of what was right and wrong, typically ingrained from a religious upbringing or a strong family linage of morals. This became known as deontology, which the Encyclopedia Britannica defines as "the rightness of an action consists in its conformity to a moral rule or command, such as 'duty for duty's sake.'"

<u>Personnel management</u>

During the Industrial Era, businesses relied more on the physical aspects of the worker to get their job done. As machines took over many of the craftsman's skills needed, work required less creative thought and more labor. To apply Frederick Taylor's scientific management to the efficient use of labor and resources, personnel departments were created to manage the hiring and firing of employees, disciplinary systems, safety programs, time and motion studies, and union relations. A hierarchical management structure was put into place to make sure the work was done properly and to enforce the compliance needed to uphold the organization's objectives. Management also made sure that the data needed to run the organization flowed in a systematic manner upward to the top executives, owners and shareholders and to the proper departments (such as accounting and personnel) for their use.

In both the East and West, the relationship of the organization to its workers was seen as dependent, with the workers being more dependent on the organization than vice-versa. This relationship could be either an impersonal one or a paternal one, typically valued according to how useful the worker was in helping the organization to achieve its purpose.

In Japan, this dependent relationship of organization to workers was often practiced as a Parent-Child relationship. In Shintoism, each individual is responsible to do whatever is needed to bring honor to the family. Those in superior positions are responsible to take care of those who are below them. Since their feudal times, the Japanese were raised to respect authority and work collaboratively; in return, they received livelihood and protection. The sense of Japanese family extends easily into the organizational sphere, so that employees are obligated to bring honor to the company, and the company is obliged to take care of the employees for their lifetime. Even in downturns, companies kept employees in purposeful work – sometimes through members of their particular keiretsu network of affiliated companies, rather than laying them off.

Wisdom and limitations within the *Rationalist* context

The *Rationalist* context arose in the mid-1800s and was dominant in business well into the 1960s. The drivers, disciplines and concepts related to this context still dominate in some businesses today. In reflecting upon the wisdom we've gained from this context so far, we acknowledge the value we can derive from it moving forward:
- The importance of discipline and focus to achieving our aims
- The importance of frugal and efficient use of resources (not being wasteful with human and planetary resources)

In contrast, we can acknowledge the limitations of this context:
- The belief that people are best treated through hierarchical, command-and-control structures inhibits the actualization of their full potential

Table 1: Cultural influences that gave rise to the *Rationalist* context:

First emerged:	Mid 1800s
Cultural influences:	Protestant work ethic Shinto work ethic Industrial revolution
Purpose of business:	Meet basic needs of society Wealth-creation for owners Economic strength for nation
Basis of meaning and purpose:	Economic strength Discipline
Recognized basis of meaning:	Societal beliefs and assumptions
Views about the nature of workers:	Need structure and controls

Table 2: Organizational drivers and disciplines for the *Rationalist* context:

Organizational drivers:	Organizational objectives
Individual drivers:	Work ethic
Organizational compass:	Strength of business network Financial accounting Productivity measures
Individual compass:	Deontology – the duty to follow the rightness of an action
Organizational structure:	Military-style hierarchy
Organizational disciplines:	Productivity management Personnel management
Approach to governance:	Compliance
Human capability most focused on:	Physical

Meaning and Purpose in the *Humanistic* Context for Business

The Humanistic context for business emerged in the 1950-60s with a worldview based on the relativistic science of Einstein, the psychology of Jean Paul Sartre and Abraham Maslow, and business writings of Douglas MacGregor, W. Edwards Deming, and Kenneth Blanchard. This context emphasizes the positive potential within human beings and aims to actualize that full potential. The purpose of business is still wealth-creation, but with a win-win mentality in which "enlightened self-interest" supplants selfish-interest. A typical quote from this context is that of Niran Jiang, a Chinese emigrant who served as an executive with Coca Cola and S. C. Johnson:

> *Business is a very important tool for individual transformation and a vehicle for personal growth. Business should be a home… for individuals to operate at the maximum of their potentials.*

As we saw in the previous context, Euro-American cultures focused more on the economic strength of the individual owners of companies, with the assumption that society would ultimately benefit from individual prosperity. The Japanese focused more on the economic strength of the nation, for which individual companies and employees were to be dedicated.

This same dichotomy holds true for a key aspect of this second context for meaning and purpose in business. The development of Euro-American cultures in the 1950s and onwards focused on the *individual* actualization of human potential – a notion made explicit in the works of Abraham Maslow, with his hierarchy of needs that culminated in self-actualization. The developments in the Japanese culture starting in that same period focused on *collective* actualization of their innovative potential – a notion made explicit in the works of Genichi Taguchi and W. Edwards Deming, who both spurred the quality movement in Japan.

This section will examine the cultural influences that led to these two forms of the common theme of "actualization" as the source and substance of meaning and purpose in this *Humanistic* context.

Cultural influences

When trying to identify the cultural influences that gave rise to the *Humanistic* context in business, it is tempting to focus on the great technological advances of the mid-20th century and how they ushered in what we now call the Information Age. But when we step back and take a compassionate look at the 1950s, a much deeper perspective starts to emerge.

In the late 1940s, perhaps the most vicious wars in history – which included the occupation of foreign countries by Germany and Japan, the Jewish holocaust, and the dropping of the Hiroshima bomb – had finally come to an end. In Europe and Japan, the focus now turned to post-war reconstruction of their societies and economies. Massive efforts and financial resources were being expended to rebuild their factories and put people to work.

In the USA, according to a Lonestar College biography of the 1950s,[21] "the end of World War II brought thousands of young servicemen back to America to pick up their lives and start new families in new homes with new jobs.

Thus, in the 1940s and 1950s, people in the East and West faced a horrific dichotomy of life's experiences. On one hand, humanity around the world had experienced, either directly or through the media, mass human destruction with the war, genocide and atomic bomb. On the other hand, there was a materialistic prosperity that was the antithesis of the great depression experienced in the decade before the World War.

<u>Self-actualization in the West</u>

Along with this expanded sharp contrast of life-experience came a restlessness about life and its meaning and purpose. The writings of the European existentialists – Frederick Nietzsche,[22] Albert Camus,[23] Jean Paul Sartre[24] – became popular. They saw man as being "thrown into this world" with the "freedom" to make their own personal meaning out of it all – i.e., there was no inherent meaning, and we had to create a meaning that fit our own situation in life.

The Nuremburg trials also sent out a message loud and clear that just following the orders of authority were no longer acceptable. The locus of power and control began to shift from the few elite at the top, and literature began to reflect the individualistic ideals of "taking charge of your own life and controlling your own fate." Learn to think for yourself and question authority and assumptions started to become cultural norms in Europe and America. The unprecedented advances in technology that brought about the Information Age, further helped to shift this power and control base from the few at the top.

Due to the intensity of World War II, single and married women of all ethnic backgrounds had to enter the workforce to support the war efforts. While many were displaced after the war, nonetheless, they had tasted independence and thus the seeds were planted for their later widespread participation in the workforce and the impact they would have on a more humanistic approach to work and management.

With energy never before experienced, American industry expanded to meet peacetime needs. Americans began buying goods not available during the war, which created corporate expansion and

jobs. Growth was everywhere. The baby boom was underway. Consumerism began to take hold in this context, where consumers not only had a great deal of new goods and services they could afford, but they also saw these purchases as a means of building their sense of self-esteem through material acquisition. Thus were born the ideas of "Find a need and fill it" and "Keep up with the Joneses."

During the 1950s and 1960s, a focus on human influences and capacities emerged in organizational theory, fueled by Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, starting from physical safety and rising up to self-actualization. According to the article "History of Organizational Theory,"[25] Maslow's theories introduced two important implications into that field. The first was that people have different needs and therefore need to be motivated by different incentives to achieve organizational objectives. The second was that people's needs change over time, meaning that as the needs of people lower in the hierarchy are met, new needs arise.

Douglas McGregor also influenced this shift in consciousness from systems to people with his Theory Y. He strived to reshape the assumptions that he claimed manager's had of workers. His theory held that humans can learn to accept and seek responsibility; most people possess a high degree of imaginative and problem-solving ability; employees are capable of effective self-direction; and that self-actualization is among the most important rewards that organizations can provide its workers.[26]

In the *Humanistic* context, these new beliefs and assumptions played a key role in shaping the mindsets of business owners, managers and workers for worker participation and empowerment.

But before these new viewpoints could take hold, they had to evolve from the long history of religious and cultural beliefs that were contrary. This meant a shift in "paradigm" and becoming conscious of the power of such beliefs over our thinking and decisions. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines paradigm as a philosophical or theoretical framework.

That was the work pioneered, in a business context, by Joel Barker in the late 1970s. Barker helped business leaders to expand their awareness of what their implicit beliefs were, and how they influenced the way business operates. As he stated in his "Power of Paradigms" presentation,[27] "Every paradigm ultimately uncovers the problems it cannot solve, thus setting the stage for a paradigm shift." As Barker popularized the concept of "paradigms" in a business setting, business leaders began to understand not only the power that paradigms had in shaping their current business constructs, but also how to proactively recognize and shift those paradigms.

Collective actualization in the East

Both the government and the economy of post-war Japan was under the control of the supreme commander of the Allied Powers in Japan, General Douglas McArthur. Under his command, a number of dramatic changes took place: the keiretsu networks of companies were liquidated; trade unions were encouraged, with a stronger voice in production decisions; large scale policies for farm reform

were instituted. As a result, according to a 1999 LA Times article on "people who most influenced business in this century":

> MacArthur's principal contribution… was to break apart an outdated and ossified economic and social structure, allowing Japan's inherent creativity to blossom. 'This was all very important for the development of Japan's post-war economy,' said Masayoshi Tsurumi, an economics professor and financial historian at Hosei University.

Simultaneously, Japan confronted the fact that the quality of its export goods was very low, and subject of many jokes. It was so bad that some companies set up factories in a Japan town named Usa, so they could claim in all-capital letters, "MADE IN USA." A professor from New York University, W. Edwards Deming, was well received when in 1950 he delivered a seminar on statistical quality control methods to Japanese business executives. The rest, as they say, is history… as captured again by the LA Times article:

> Scholars note that Japan was receptive to Deming at a time when America was not, in part because Deming's ideas dovetailed with many of Japan's own traditions. Japan had long held hard work and quality craftsmanship as important virtues, and its technology even during the war surprised many Americans. Deming preached that companies must treat workers as associates, not hired hands, and he blamed management if workers were not motivated to work well.
>
> We imported the system, but modified it to the Japanese style,' said Naohiro Yashiro, professor of economics at Sophia University. When Japan hit its peak in the 1980s, forcing many U.S. industries to their knees and prompting Americans to experiment with quality circles and low-inventory manufacturing systems, many of Deming's ideas were rediscovered by the United States.

Thus the Japanese actualized the collective potential of their culture, with the aid of a Western management method that was derided by Western business.

Ironically, it was Japan's success with what became known as total quality management that brought about a partial mergence and integration of these two separate paths to economic strength, discipline, and eventual actualization. The West became more acquainted with the wisdom of collective actualization, while Japan became more exposed to self-actualization. In the emerging global economy, the overlapping influence of these two cultural paradigms gave us less dichotomy and greater integration of East and West in this *Humanistic* context for meaning and purpose in business.

Organizational drivers

<u>Mission and Values</u>
In this context, organizational objectives expanded into mission statements as a conscious driver for business meaning and purpose. In an article titled "Mission Statements: A Thematic Analysis of

Rhetoric Across Institutional Type,"[28] the authors Morphey and Matthew acknowledged that mission statements became popular in the 1970s, citing Peter Drucker as one of their influences. Keller, in his seminal work on strategic planning in 1982, argued that "mission statements were a necessary part of an institution's strategic planning process." Mission statements as a driver for meaning and purpose also became a way for an organization to define its distinct character and identity as business competition continued to expand globally.

Organizational values became a more explicit compass for meaning and purpose. Hill and Jones, in their book *Strategic Management*,[29] describe organizational values as "beliefs and ideas about what kinds of goals members of an organization should pursue and ideas about the appropriate kinds of standards of behavior organizational members should use to achieve these goals." The cultural values for self-actualization was spurred not only by the TQM movement, but also by the new importance given to "product champions" and "intrapreneurs" who focused their passion for meaning and purpose through personally-meaningful initiatives for innovation. The cultural values for collective-actualization built upon the Japanese practice of quality circles to value employees as "customers" for quality.

The decentralization of decision making was a powerful force that met with managerial resistance. But as consensus statements of mission and values grew in usage and potency, they became the coordinating factor that could replace the bureaucratic command and control organization. Employees were now being empowered to make more decentralized decisions and needed a compass to guide them, thus the organizational mission and values played an important role.

The strong vestiges of "work ethic" began to shift in this context as personal values emerged as a driver for workers' meaning and purpose. While the "soft side" of personal values was not always openly addressed within the business context, the professional motivations and aspirations of workers, fueled by their personal values, began to be discussed and considered when making job assignments or career placements. Ultimately, these personal values were recognized as strong motivators for "product champions" and "intrapreneurs" so vital to successful corporate innovation.

Organizational culture and matrix design

The Industrial Revolution and now the Information Age, had brought changes to society and to workers such that reliance on religious beliefs began to decline. Scientific management also declined, while human empowerment gained in popularity and acceptance. The field of psychology and ethics, with its focus on morality and meaning began to substitute for religion as a compass for meaning and purpose in life and work. While new management disciplines gained popularity and many are still strong today, a focus on "leadership" and the "how to's" of good leaders also became prominent.

The Information Age dramatically influenced meaning and purpose in this context as businesses began to rely more on the mental-emotional aspects of the worker to get their job done. The

organizational structure began to evolve into more of a matrixed organization, rather than a rigid hierarchy. Both compliance and commitment were seen as critical motivating factors as workers became more independent and intrapreneurship was valued. While data collection and flow of facts were essential to the *Rationalist* context, as business and technology began to expand, data needed to be organized into information that could be used as a reference tool across multiple disciplines. And with the expansion of information technologies, this information came under the purview of people throughout the organization, not just managers.

Another driver of meaning and purpose in this context was a more conscious awareness and focus on the organizational culture. The "Dictionary of Business and Management"[30] defines organizational culture as: "the values, customs, rituals, attitudes, and norms shared by members of an organization." It identified three major categories of organizational culture: 1) an integrative culture where the objective is to obtain a consensus regarding the values and basic assumptions of the organization and to produce consistent actions; 2) a differentiated culture where subcultures develop that have internal consensus about values and basic assumptions, but differ greatly between each subculture; and 3) a fragmentation culture where there are multiple interpretations of values and assumptions, which produce great ambiguity.

Empowerment

The explosion of information and communications technologies, including the personal computer, further reinforced the value of empowering managers and employees throughout the organization to participate in problem solving and decision making.

Personnel transformed into Human Resources and began to focus on empowerment and employee training and development beyond just the specific work skills needed. To help the organization make these sweeping changes, the discipline of organizational development was born in the 1950s and 1960s. Warren Bennis,[31] a modern day leadership guru, describes OD as "a complex strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values, and structure of organizations so that they can better adapt to new technologies, markets, and challenges."

Individual empowerment with an intention to help employees self-actualize their potential spurred the need for a new way of organizing employees into teams and thus team development became an important skill building activity. Values clarification, self-directed achievement, quality of work life and job enrichment were new concepts that were born in this context to support meaning and purpose for workers and leaders.

Participative management and MBO

Peter Drucker brought forth an expanded philosophy of management that advocated focusing on goals and objectives, rather than on activities and processes. One of the early new management

theories popularized by Drucker in his 1954 book *The Practice of Management* was Management by Objectives (commonly referred to as MBO). The core to Drucker's MBO is participative goal setting between manager and employee, with measures for both to see, as objectively as possible, actual performance against agreed standards. His ideal was that when employees are involved in setting their own goals, rather than a command-control delegation of goals, they are more likely to fulfill their responsibilities. And their feeling and practice of empowerment would lead to more motivated, self-actualized achievement of personal and organizational goals. So the MBO process benefits everyone through better communication, clarity of goals, commitment, and job satisfaction,

This way of managing, as one tool of participative management, began to replace Taylor's scientific management theories. John Uzzi, in his article titled "Participative Management: What it is and what it is not?"[32] described what participative management looks like when used properly by a manager: "[it] provides employees with timely information on the roles they play in the organization and promotes a sense of employee ownership. By encouraging employees to offer ideas and suggestions, the participation process gives them a vested interest in their work, thus promoting a sense of commitment."

In this context, efficiency was upgraded to "quality improvement." Of course, the essence of the total quality management process – as developed through Taguchi, Deming, Juran, Cosby, and others – was participative management. One specific principle from Dr. Deming that contributed to greater meaning and purpose of work was to "drive fear out of the workplace, rather than make it a motivator to get the work done."

Ethics

A further development in organizational disciplines was the emergence of "business ethics" as an academic field of corporate importance. As multinational corporations grew larger and more powerful over the decades, the negative impact on the environmental and human society – especially from the chemical, steel and petroleum industries – grew as well. Thus, according to Richard T. De George in his research paper on the "History of Business Ethics," business ethics emerged as an academic field in the 1970s and with it brought to business the tools by which the morality of new issues could be intelligently debated.[33] The rising awareness and transparency of corporate behavior and its impacts continue to demand that ethics be a serious business compass to guide its decisions and actions.

As ethics began to find a primary role in corporate mindsets, especially in the multi-national corporations, value-based management and value-based leadership emerged as new disciplines that also gained acceptance and recognition.

All of these new disciplines spurred a new career path, which was that of business consultant and business writer. While the academics initially fulfilled these roles, it spread to individuals who either became independent consultants or joined together to create boutique consulting firms. Well-known

professional services firms such as McKinsey, established in 1920, had originally started as a "management engineering" firm focused on finance, budgeting, and efficiency, but evolved into a "management consulting" firm helping healthy companies to thrive and grow.[34]

Wisdom and limitations within the *Humanistic* context

The *Humanistic* context first gained momentum in the 1950s and 1960s and began to experience its full maturity in the 1980s and 1990s. The drivers, disciplines and concepts related to this context still play a dominate role in business today. In reflecting upon the wisdom we've gained from this context so far, we acknowledge the value we can derive from it moving forward:

- The importance of empowering people to actualize their individual human potential
- The importance of engaging people to work collaboratively to actualize their collective human potential

In contrast, we can acknowledge the limitations of this context:

- Organizations still see themselves as the center of their own universe, limiting their view of prosperity and well-being of not only themselves, but others

Table 3: Cultural influences that gave rise to the *Humanistic* context:

First emerged:	1950s
Cultural influences:	Post war reconstruction Information technology Materialistic prosperity Search for meaning and purpose in life
Purpose of business:	Shared wealth-creation Find a need and fill it
Basis of meaning and purpose:	Actualization (Self and Collective)
Recognized basis of meaning:	Paradigms (mindsets)
Views about the nature of workers:	People have different needs and are motivated to actualize their potential

Table 4: Organizational drivers and disciplines for the *Humanistic* context:

Organizational drivers:	Mission Organizational culture
Individual drivers:	Personal values
Organizational compass:	Organizational values Business ethics
Individual compass:	Morality
Organizational structure:	Matrixed
Organizational disciplines:	Participative management (MBO) Human resources Organizational development Empowerment
Approach to governance:	Compliance and commitment
Human capability most focused on:	Mental-Emotional

Meaning and Purpose in the *Wholistic* Context for Business

The Wholistic context surfaced in business in the 1970-80s. Its worldview is based on scientific developments in physics, chemistry, and biology and typified by Werner Heisenberg (quantum physics) and Ilya Prigogine (self-organizing structures). The psychology of Carol Jung and Stan Grof, along with the business writings of Peter Senge and Stephen Covey, further developed this worldview. This context understands life in terms of systems and interdependence, and aims to for stewardship of the greater whole. The goal of business evolves beyond "wealth-creation for *shareholders*" to "wealth creation for the optimal benefit of all *stakeholders*." A quote from Nobel Peace prize winner Muhammad Yunus typifies this context:

> *There needs to be many more companies whose primary aim is not that of earning the highest profits, but that of providing the greatest benefit possible for human kind.*

Today, the Wholistic context has a solid foundation that can be easily recognized, but is still in an early stage of maturity and has yet to become the norm in business around the world.

Evidence of its rising presence is the growing number of corporate vision statements for corporate social responsibility and accountability to stakeholders, along with the growth of "socially responsible" investment funds and triple bottom-line reporting. Thus the overarching theme of meaning and purpose in the Wholistic context is "well being for all."

Cultural influences

If we could use one word to sum up the cultural influences that are driving meaning and purpose in this context, it would be "pressure."

We are experiencing the pressure of diversity. We no longer live and work within a homogeneous society; we must now understand and integrate multiple social cultures, languages, religions, generations, and worldviews into our day-to-day lives.

We are experiencing the pressure to embrace rapid change and the deployment of new generation technologies, processes, products and services.

We are experiencing the pressure of hyper-competition around the world between major corporations and the often more nimble and innovative entrepreneurial firms.

We are experiencing the pressure of inter-dependence. Scientists, sociologists, economists, activists and spiritualists have helped us realize that what we do in our day-to-day life, wherever we live, impacts the greater whole, whether positively or negatively.

We are experiencing the pressure of too much information, too much stimulus via electronic data to be able to digest and assimilate.

We are experiencing the pressure of spiraling health issues and costs, when most health issues are lifestyle-related, and many have occurred as a result of man-made chemicals and abuse.

We are experiencing the pressure of over-population and how to not only feed, house and clothe the poorest of the poor, but also how to provide meaningful employment to the burgeoning workforce around the world. (India alone will likely have over 700 million people in the adult workforce by the year 2020.)

We are experiencing the pressure of a materialistic, consumer-driven lifestyle, full of financial and time stresses as well as over-consumption of the earth's resources.

We are experiencing the collective mental and emotional pressure of decades of potential nuclear war that could literally create a holocaust of entire nations.

We are experiencing the pressure of the degradation of our environmental and planetary ecosystems as well as the extinction of species.

We are experiencing the pressure of decades-old structures crumbling in a matter of days and weeks. The Berlin Wall in 1989, the Soviet Union in 1991, major corporations like Enron, Arthur Andersen, and Worldcom in 2001-2002, the world's financial industry in 2008.

These great pressures come at us from two broad directions; all presaged by visionaries of the 1950-60's who foresaw how human history was unfolding. In the early 1960s, McLuhan coined the term "global village" for the trend towards a totally new level of social collectivity. That movement to collectivity has given us the pressures of diversity, competition, rapid change, interdependence, information overload, and lifestyle-related health issues.

In the mid to late 1960s, economist Kenneth Boulding and architect-author-inventor-futurist Buckminster Fuller helped popularize the notion that we are all passengers on "spaceship earth." Both spoke of the folly of conducting the global economy as if there were unlimited resources and of fostering political exploitation of rich over poor. Today, that folly has produced pressures of over-

population, over-consumption, nuclear terror, environmental degradation, and sudden crumbling of socio-economic and political structures.

Now, if we could use one word to sum up the common theme underlying the *solutions* to these pressures – and the source of meaning and purpose – it would be *consciousness.* In his 1950 book *The Future of Man,* Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Jesuit priest and eminent paleontologist, spoke of the "law of complexity consciousness": that we are evolving towards a higher consciousness in which the individual and the collective are both enhanced. He believed that as people around the world came into closer and closer contact with each other – whether through growth in population, travel, or communication – the growing complexity of social networks would give rise to an overall increase in consciousness. How has that vision materialized?

> We are beginning to realize that there are enduring, positive qualities of good character found across cultures and time that can bring us together and bridge our differences, without losing the beauty of our diversity.

> We are beginning to realize that we have a say in creating our world and our future and that our thoughts, words and actions have an impact, large and small.
> We are beginning to realize the critical role that ancient wisdom, spiritual texts, and universal principles must play as a source of meaning and motivation, both personally and organizationally.

> We are beginning to embrace the slogan "think globally and act locally."

> We are beginning to realize there is a "collective unconscious," a "global mind," that must become more explicit, and in many cases transformed, in order for us to not only survive, but to thrive in this new millennium.

> We are beginning to realize that we are responsible for our own health and well-being rather than turning that responsibility over to pharmaceutical firms, doctors, technology, and consumer-driven ideologies.

> We are beginning to expand our consciousness to see the "whole system" and its innate, self-organizing nature amidst uncertainty, chaos and complexity.

> We are beginning to shift our consciousness from "doing and having" to "being."

> We are beginning to better understand different aspects of our human nature – that we have a higher nature and a lower nature, each of which plays a significant role in our quality of life.

> We are beginning to realize the importance of ecosystems and what they can teach us about life and business.

We are beginning to seriously embrace Albert Einstein's theory that we cannot solve our current problems at the same level of consciousness at which they were created.

Organizational Drivers

This *Wholistic* context is still in its early to middle stages of maturity and will undoubtedly continue to evolve. In this section we will look at four organizational drivers and disciplines that have emerged thus far.

<u>Vision and higher purpose</u>

We saw how organizational mission and values statements drove the *Humanistic* context. While these drivers are still alive and well, a new dimension emerged in the 1980s for the *Wholistic* context: the organizational *vision*. An organization's vision statement reflects what its members want it to become in the future – a higher purpose that unites those who share in its process. Academics such as Peter Senge, Noel Trichy and Stephen Covey helped business leaders better understand the importance of having a shared vision, as an organization and as a team.

John Adams, one of the pioneers in the organizational development and transformation movement, published two anthologies, in 1984 and 1986, entitled *Transforming Work*[35] and *Transforming Leadership.*[36] These were some of the first writings about the "how to" process of developing personal and organizational visions. He describes the difference between *mission* and *vision* this way:[37]

> *Mission is the organization's purpose. The vision is a stretch goal – 'What is the best possible, or ideal, outcome?' Vision statements are often written in present tense, 'as if' they were already realized, because the subconscious co-creative process can only say 'yes' to any suggestion, and if the vision is written in future terms the co-creative process only can say 'yes' to 'someday...'*

Business consultants like Stephen Covey are pointing the way to the future maturity of this *Wholistic* context by urging leaders to further expand their vision statements to express a higher purpose, something bigger than the organization itself can achieve and has a wider impact than just their products and services, something that connects and inspires people at the soul level. Covey is also urging leaders to further expand their organizational values by basing them on principles that are universal, timeless and self-evident.

While investigating the individual drivers and compass for meaning and purpose within this context, we were reminded of the work of a consumer futurist at Stanford Research Institute in the 1970s, Arnold Mitchell. Mitchell created a *Values and Lifestyles* (VALS) assessment to explain how values and lifestyles affected consumer buying patterns. In 1989 this assessment was redefined to segment

consumers based on their more enduring personality traits. They found that consumers were "inspired by one of three primary motivations: ideals, achievement, and self-expression."[38]

It is quite evident that the VALS primary motivation factors of ideals, achievement and self-expression are now prominent as individual drivers of meaning in these early stages of this context. However, we also see a deeper dimension emerging that we believe will ultimately provide an expanded source of meaning and motivation, which is human values and character.

By human values we mean those values that represent our highest human nature, often spoken of as our higher intelligence or known in India as the "buddhi." Today we have a mixture of values in our work environments, some of which represent our higher nature and some of which represent our lower nature, often called ego or self-centered desires. When acted out in our work, human values demonstrate the positive qualities of good character found across all cultures and throughout time. Since human values transcend our lower natures and selfish interests, they are the greatest source to bring us together and bridge our differences across cultures and generations.

Based on our own personal experience and in working with hundreds of other professionals, we have found that when individuals sincerely strive to live and work from a basis of human values, it will naturally take them through a purification process. As they move through this purification process, their lower human nature ultimately becomes subsumed by their higher human nature, thus transforming them into a whole human being with strong character. S. K. Chakraborty, Founder Convener of the Management Centre for Human Values at the Indian Institute of Management in Calcutta describes this process as, "We will progress from fragmentist consciousness to holistic consciousness."

As a result of this trend to human values in action, a new breed of business disciplines has emerged in this context in response to activists and consumers around the world who have helped business leaders see and understand the negative impact their organizations have had on society and the environment. Some of these new disciplines include: corporate social responsibility, sustainability, socially responsible investing, as well as an expansion to stakeholder responsibility that includes not only shareholders, employees and customers, but also vendors, society and the environment.

Organizational development and transformation

In this context, we are seeing an evolution from "development" to "transformation." Organizational development practices are now evolving into organizational transformation practices, where we are beginning to better understand the nature and process of transformation.

Organization development (OD) is a planned, organization-wide effort to increase organizational effectiveness through planned interventions in the organization's "processes," using behavioral-science knowledge and managed from the top. Organization transformation (OT) is the fundamental

re-orientation of paradigm or mindset of an organization as it moves towards a future it cannot pre-define. In an OD Practitioner article titled, *Awake at the Wheel: Moving Beyond Change Management to Conscious Change Leadership*,[39] Anderson and Anderson describe OT as: "The future is unknown at the start of the change process and can only be created by forging ahead with the intent to discover it."

Other signs of transformation can be found in the still emerging disciplines of "emotional intelligence," "conscious capitalism," "servant leadership," "whole systems thinking," "ecosystems," and "the living organization." All of them strive to go beyond "doing what we've been doing, but better" to "fundamentally shifting how we think about what we've been doing, and innovate from there."

While creativity emerged in the *Humanistic* context, innovation has become a prominent global theme in this context. Large corporations have begun to create the role of "Chief Innovation Officer" to facilitate the process of innovation across the organization. In these early stages of this context innovation strategies are beginning to evolve. C. K. Prahalad, a professor at the University of Michigan before his death in 2010, who wrote the *Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid*, helped multi-national executives take a more enlightened approach to innovation in the developing world. "The ultimate challenge is to create capitalism that puts individuals at the center of the universe," he said.[40]

The co-authors of this paper are developing a next-generation IP and IT system for values centered innovation, which is based on human values and wholistic versatility, while integrating the full complement of innovation empowerment, tools and processes across an organization.

Learning and knowledge management

Peter Senge ushered in the new discipline of "the learning organization" with his book *The Fifth Discipline.*[41] The five disciplines Senge outlined in his book, which are beginning to take hold in this context are: personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking. All of them – especially the addition of systems thinking that built on the pioneering work of systems dynamics by Jay W. Forrester – help to develop a holistic consciousness that incorporates holistic thinking in every business deliberation and decision.

Another tangible outcome of this new thrust for learning is the new corporate position titled Chief Learning Officer. Srikumar Rao, a professor at both Columbia Business School and London Business School teaches a popular class on "Creativity & Personal Mastery," which is also a reflection of the learning organization principles.

We have evolved from more centralized expert-centered training to a more dispersed coaching and mentoring model of capability development. Dennis Jaffe and Cynthia Scott, authors of a book chapter titled "Visionary Leadership: Moving a Company from Burnout to Inspired Performance," describes the most valuable resources in this context as: energy, dedication and creativity.[42]

Besides the rise of knowledge management disciplines and systems in major corporations around the world, at the turn of the century, academics and consultants began to speak about the "Knowledge Era." New concepts and perspectives began to emerge about how we need to educate, lead and manage the knowledge worker and the knowledge environment, especially at a global level. The International Center for Vocation Education and Training[43] in Australia conducted an in-depth research on professional development in the Knowledge Era. They characterized the Knowledge Era as having: multiple and competing ideologies, agendas, roles and priorities; ambiguity, uncertainty and contradictions; and a great amount of energy and creativity. Their recommendations included disciplines such as: flow theory, appreciative inquiry, signature strengths, business wisdom, holistic activities, life-based learning, and strength based methodologies.

One example of new concepts arising for the Knowledge Era can be found in a book titled, *Human Resource Management in the Knowledge Economy.*[44] The authors put forward a new mandate for Human Resources, proposing four roles better suited to the knowledge economy: (a) human capital steward, (b) knowledge facilitator, (c) relationship builder, and (d) rapid deployment specialist.[45]

Sustainability reporting

The fourth organizational driver for the *Wholistic* context has been the movement among corporations, often driven by activist stockholders and stakeholders, toward annual "triple bottom line" reports of the corporate impact on *people* and the *planet* as well as *profits*. This movement includes the trends of corporate social responsibility, socially responsible investing, and "green" products and services – and has its roots back in the early 1970s.

Between 1950 and 2000, the world population doubled, food production tripled, energy use quadrupled, and overall economic activity quintupled.[46] That was, and is, an unsustainable pattern for the future. The impact of this state on business – and the driving urgency to change the status quo of how business operates – was succinctly expressed by Gaylord Nelson, former Senator in the USA and founder of the first Earth Day events on April 22, 1970:

> *The economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment, not the other way around. All economic activity is dependent upon that environment and its underlying resource base of forests, water, air, soil, and minerals. When the environment is finally forced to file for bankruptcy because its resource base has been polluted, degraded, dissipated, and irretrievably compromised, the economy goes into bankruptcy with it.*

In 1992, the UN held the "Conference on Environment and Development" (also known as the Rio Summit) to bring developed and developing countries together to determine global steps to co-create a sustainable future for all global cultures and the earth. From an ecology and climate change standpoint, this convention was followed by the Kyoto Convention in 1997 and the Copenhagen Convention in 2009. This was also the first step towards the UN Millennium Development Goals in

2000, signed by 192 countries, addressing global issues such as poverty, hunger, education, gender equality, health, environment, and global economic development.

This urgency for sustainability, along with the interdependence of our economic, social, and ecological well-being, has powered a consciousness of "stakeholder well-being" that is driving this context for meaning and purpose in business – and life in general. "Think global, act local" is one expression of holistic thinking that stretches our thought to include all possible stakeholders, including the planet, who are affected by our actions.

The movement for triple bottom line reporting is the mission of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI),[47] an independent organization that is a collaborating center of UNEP (United Nations Environmental Programme). Its vision is that reporting on economic, environmental, and social performance by all enterprises worldwide would become as routine as financial reporting. They have taken the lead in translating the triple measures of well-being into annual corporate "sustainability" or "triple bottom line" reports. As of October 2008, more than 450 corporations have filed sustainability reports with GRI, including Infosys (India), Medtronic (USA), Sony (Japan), Bayer AG (Germany), Shell (Netherlands), Barclays (UK), and Cathay Pacific (China).

We as co-authors feel that as this context continues to mature, we will ultimately see an emergence of what we call "Whole Bottom Line" integrity and reporting: whole person, whole planet, whole prosperity, and whole principles,[48] as a new compass for meaning and purpose in business. Each component would encompass qualities and characteristics such as:

- Whole person – the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being of individuals and society
- Whole planet – the impact a business has on the geosphere (terrestrial elements and matter), biosphere (bio-eco system), econosphere (envelope of economic activity), and noosphere (collective consciousness of human beings)
- Whole prosperity – wealth-creation that addresses human dignity, community vitality, whole person health and learning, and meeting true material/financial needs
- Whole principles – synthesizing the wisdom of the East and West into a coherent whole

The cultural theme for the *Wholistic* context is perhaps best summarized in two quotations. The former Managing Director of the largest steel producer in India once told us, "Business must benefit society; there is no question about it. You cannot be a spike of prosperity in a sea of poverty." And as the former UN Secretary General U. Thant prayed on one international Earth Day: "May there only be peaceful and cheerful Earth Days to come for our beautiful Spaceship Earth as it continues to spin and circle in frigid space with its warm and fragile cargo of animate life." [49]

Wisdom and limitations within the *Wholistic* context

The *Wholistic* context first gained momentum in the 1980s and 1990s. The drivers, disciplines and concepts related to this context have yet to come to full maturity in the business environment, but there are many signs of its increasing strength. In reflecting upon the wisdom we've gained from this context so far, we acknowledge the value we can derive from it moving forward:

- The importance of both consciousness and human values as dual inputs to determine what is "well-being for all" when making decisions
- The importance of "whole picture/systems" thinking, and considering the complexity of systems dynamics before acting

In contrast, we can acknowledge a limitation of this context:

- A focus on the "horizontal" relationship among all stakeholder-constituents within creation, without reference to the "vertical" relationship with the source of creation

Table 5: Cultural influences that gave rise to the *Wholistic* context:

First emerged:	1980s
Cultural influences:	Pressure Consciousness
Purpose of business:	Make a meaningful contribution to society and the environment
Basis of meaning and purpose:	Well-being for all
Recognized basis of meaning:	Systems (contexts)
Views about the nature of workers:	People can be self-organizing and self-motivating

Table 6: Organizational drivers and disciplines for the *Wholistic* context:

Organizational drivers:	Organizational vision Higher purpose
Individual drivers:	Human values
Organizational compass:	Universal principles and laws Triple bottom line Whole bottom line
Individual compass:	Good character
Organizational structure:	Flexible, networked "ecosystem"
Organizational disciplines:	Organization transformation Learning organization Corporate social responsibility Stakeholder focus Sustainability Knowledge management
Approach to governance:	Intrinsic motivation
Human capability most focused on:	Intuitive intelligence

Meaning and Purpose in the *Spiritual-based* Context for Business

In the 1990s, the Spiritual-based context arose with a worldview based on the physics-consciousness of David Bohm and Fritjof Capra and the evolutionary consciousness of Teilhard de Chardin, the psychologies of Ken Wilbur and D. T. Suzuki, and business writings of Peter Vaille, S. K. Chakraborty, and William George. This context embraces a transcendent nature of life and aims to "co-create with the Creator." From this view, the nature of business itself is transformed, so that wealth creation is no longer the *goal,* but rather the *means* for enabling a higher purpose of business: "spiritual fulfillment and service to society." A quote that typifies this context is from Janice Webb, a former top executive with Motorola Corporation:

> *You must earn the right to lead every day, and spirituality is necessary to do that. Spirituality gives you immense courage, yet you also embrace your own humanness and imperfections.*

The most deep-seated discernment of meaning and purpose in the Spiritual-based context is "*spiritual fulfillment.***"** The word "spiritual" comes from the Latin word "spiritus" and the Greek "spiros," both of which mean "breath." Spirit is *the "animating principle, the supernatural essence" which "breathes" life into creation.*[50]

For the past eight years we have been co-directing a non-profit organization where we research and develop programs for leading and working from a spiritual basis. We have found that people throughout the world describe spirituality in varied ways, and may or may not base it on participation in an organized religion. Some of those descriptions include:

a) Tapping into a deeper meaning in life that transcends our physical existence
b) Having a relationship with the Source of creation (i.e. God, Higher Power, Allah, Jehovah, Brahman, etc.)
c) Experiencing oneness with Divinity
d) Being "fully conscious" of the Source of life and living from that awareness
e) Living in harmony with the essential nature and inter-connectedness of all creation
f) Living all aspects of life according to a set of religious principles

People have also expressed their many reservations about a close relationship between spirituality and business – fearing the entrance of religious conflict into the workplace, and feeling that spirituality is a private matter anyhow.

Those reservations provide us with a provocative question for this last context: *How could it be possible for spiritual fulfillment to be a fundamental basis for meaning and purpose in business?*

Cultural influences

While "pressure and consciousness" were prominent themes in the previous context, one theme we see for this *Spiritual-based* context – which first emerged in the early 1990s and is still in its infancy – is "paradox."

On the one hand there is an ever-increasing externalization of our attention toward worldly affairs, especially in the business context where complexity, consumerism and consumption are growing at hyper-speed throughout the world. On the other hand, there is an ever-increasing internationalization of our attention toward a consciousness that goes beyond the limits of our worldly reality and unites us as one human family responsible for creating our future.

As we looked for cultural influences for this context, we eventually came across contributions from corporate leaders, academics, scientists, and ultimately from people of all walks of life experiencing a spiritual renaissance.

<u>Business leadership</u>

While trying to gain a general understanding of the cultural influences that are giving rise to this context, for weeks we first read research, articles, books, and book chapters. We were impressed with the number of business executives in the 1990s who stepped forth with books describing how they brought their own version of spiritual fulfillment alive in how they led and managed their enterprises. The first was William George, then Chairman of Medtronic Inc. the world's largest producer of medical electronics. He was outspoken in declaring that everyone was a spiritual being, and to tap into that "reality" was a way to bring out the greatest potential of each person, the company as a whole, and all of society. He was just as adamant that it wasn't a matter of religion, for people of any faith, or no faith at all, could work together in service to others.

We found other business executives such as G. Narayana[51] of Excel Industries, Paul Autry[52] of Meredith Publications and Max DePree[53] of Hermann-Miller Furniture who joined in this newly emerging call for a spiritual awareness in business. Academics such as S. K. Chakraborty,[54] Subhash Sharma,[55] Debashis Chatterjee,[56] Andre Delbecq,[57] Judi Neal,[58] and Dorothy Marcic;[59] and consultants such as Mrityunjay B. Athreya,[60] John Renesch,[61] Jack Hawley,[62] and Jay Conger[63] added their voices as well. For all of these, spirituality is simply a part of what it means to be human, inseparable from the human enterprise in business. By the latter half of the 1990s, the abundance of books on spirituality at work represented the fastest growing segment of the business book publishing industry, according to Steve Piersanti, founder of Barrett-Koehler Publishing.

We also considered the experience of executives we met in our corporate consulting work, such as Janiece Webb, senior vice president with Motorola Corporation, USA. She had started as a worker on the night shift factory line and ended up running billion dollar businesses. She exemplified a reliance on spirituality as the source of both strong leadership and inner fulfillment:

> *If ever there's a time for spiritual leadership, it's now. You must earn the right to lead every day, and spirituality is necessary to do that. Spirituality means to be connected in a real way to life, with the centre, at the core. It keeps you from doing many short-term tactical actions that are often wrong for the business and the people. It also gives you immense courage to stand tall against damaging politics. Being a spiritual leader can sometimes be lonely, but you feel happy.*

Through our non-profit organization's "Spiritual-Based Leadership Research Program," we have interviewed dozens of highly respected and successful executives from around the world who have integrated their spiritual search to be "whole" people with their business leadership. As some of them told us:

- *I think a business exists to provide an innovative and compelling answer to a societal need in the form of a needed service or product. When this purpose is approached through a spiritual lens, it will be shaped differently in many ways. The needs you start becoming attentive to shift. The transformational system you create to receive inputs and transform outputs will also shift. The character of the organization's culture will shift. Your own willingness as a business leader to endure the mystery of suffering will shift. You will see all the elements of business challenges as part of a calling to service.*

- *There is such a need for a complete rebirth of trust in our business leaders. Somewhere along the line leaders have lost their humility and in doing so they have lost their compassion and empathy, and their inner connection to God. I think this is something we need to come back to.*

- *Our responsibility is to insure that the company will survive and thrive for the next 120 years. We cannot just attend to the short term. When you begin to think this way, you are really entering into the spirit of family, into the spirit of a multi-cultural environment, and into the spirit of humanity as a whole.*

Not one of the leaders we interviewed was spared from facing ethical dilemmas and challenges as they led their businesses in this increasingly complex, global business environment. Yet their principles were somehow different from the norm. For example, as they dealt with the pressures of financial performance and success, they formulated principles consistent with their spiritual view of life:

- *We need to make money, but the reason why we exist, our raison d'être, is much more than that. We are a team with a common purpose, a moral purpose, and we do everything we can to live up to that purpose.*

- *If you have a sound policy based on caring for people, not harming anyone or anything, and a profitable business strategy, then the financial success will come automatically.*

- *Yes, we must make a profit; but most importantly, we must ask: How did we make this profit?*

Academics

In addition, a growing number of academic professionals are shifting from traditional business disciplines to spiritual-based business disciplines. A long-time, respected academic in Europe, Peter Pruzan, now Professor Emeritus from the Copenhagen Business School in Denmark, recently titled his bio: "From rationality to morality to spirituality." Pruzan has been widely recognized in Europe for his pioneering work in ethical accounting and helping to establish two new university departments and three international research and professional organizations. Based on his personal spiritual transformation, since the late-1990s he has been actively engaged in researching, writing and speaking about spiritual-based leadership in business and was a co-author of the book *Leading with Wisdom: Spiritual-Based Leadership in Business.*

Andre Delbecq, former Dean of the Santa Clara Graduate School of Business in the USA, once stated in an interview with us, "There are two things I never thought I would see in my lifetime. The fall of Russia and the word 'God' used in the Academy of Management." Delbecq, a long-time respected academic in the field of organizational development, made a dramatic shift in his career at the age of 65 when he spent his one year sabbatical studying and practicing spirituality. This deeper personal experience of spirituality led him to found the Institute for Spirituality and Organizational Leadership at the Santa Clara Graduate School of Business in the year 2000.

Today, not only is the word "God" being used in the Academy of Management, but a special interest group for "Management, Spirituality and Religion" was formed in the year 2001. Jerry Biberman was the founder and first chair of this special interest group and now serves as editor of the *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion* and is co-editor of the book *At Work: Spirituality Matters.*[64] Biberman and two other colleagues from the University of Scranton and London Metropolitan University developed a model for researching spirituality in organizations to "help researchers in the field organize their future work in order to increasingly build on each others' research."[65] We ourselves receive numerous requests for advice and input from Ph.D. candidates around the world who are committed to researching spirituality in organizations.

As yet another example of this organic emergence of spirituality in both business and academia, Ashoke Maitra, former head of Human Resources for the Times of India with 7,000 employees, founded a post-graduate business academy in Mumbai, India; and Anil Sachdev, former CEO of Grow Talent in India, founded the post-graduate School of Inspired Leadership. These are two examples of a growing list of corporate professionals who, upon seeing the critical need firsthand, are leaving the corporate world in order to establish exemplary academic institutes that focus on developing the whole person, including the spiritual aspects, together with academic excellence.

This rise in keen academic interest around the subject of spirituality in organizations, reminded us of the insights that Abraham Maslow made near the end of his life. Maslow revealed that there was a level on the hierarchy of human needs that was above self-*actualization*, that of self-*transcendence*. As he stated in his papers, "[Transcenders] may be said to be much more often aware of the realm of Being (B-realm and B-cognition), to be living at the level of Being… to have unitive consciousness and "plateau experience" (serene and contemplative B-cognitions rather than climactic ones)."[66]

Another academic, Dr. Clare W. Graves, the late Psychology Professor Emeritus of Union College, developed what is today known as the "Spiral of Values" theory to explain our human development. He explains it thus:

> *The psychology of the mature human being is an unfolding, emergent, oscillating, spiraling process marked by progressive subordination of older, lower-order behavior systems to newer, higher-order systems as man's existential problems change. I am not saying… that one style of being, one form of human existence is inevitably and in all circumstances superior to or better than another form of human existence… I deeply believe that for the overall welfare of total man's existence in this world, over the long run of time, higher levels are better than lower levels and that the prime good of any society's governing figures should be to promote human movement up the levels of human existence.[67]*

Cynthia Wigglesworth, a colleague of ours who has spent the past 6 years researching and developing a Spiritual Intelligence instrument, developed a 4-hour DVD program[68] in which she explains Dr. Graves' theory in simple, layman terms. In her presentation, she shares that research has shown that we as a human species have now entered the next tier of human development, which comprises two aspects. One aspect is more personal and the other is more unitive. She explained that this new tier of human development based on spirituality and unity is the first time that humans are able to embrace and hold without judgment all of the lower levels.

S. K. Chakraborthy, a seasoned academic with the Indian Institute of Management in Calcutta, is the Founding Convener for the Management Centre for Human Values, where his goal has been to research and support practical spirituality in business. His latest co-authored book, *Spirituality in Management: Means or Ends,*[69] shares his experiences with over 10,000 business professionals over three decades. Chakraborthy has coined several phrases and concepts in his book *Ethical Management*[70] that provide us with a glimpse of the types of business disciplines and theories that may begin to emerge and mature within this context.

Sacro-secular symbiosis: the sacred guiding and nurturing the secular.

Spirinomics: social and economic affairs that are imbued with a comprehensive Transcendent awareness, transforming and elevating all aspects of secular life into a sacred process.

Holism: an experiential state of deep integral awareness that synthesizes opposites from a progressively higher and expansive level of perception.

Ethico-moral business ashram: transforming the workplace into a "spiritual/moral gymnasium" where income, profit, and so on are treated as the *means* for ensuring the wholesome physical existence of employees and society – while the *ends* to be served are the flowering of the spiritual essence in humans.

Scientists

Literally, people like these are bound together, often without knowing it, to produce a global dynamic that has given birth to this new context. It's not only happening in the business side of the *Spiritual-based* context, but in other fields as well, such as technology, science and spirituality. Teilhard de Chardin,[71] one of the early scientists to speak out about the synthesis of these fields, was an eminent paleontologist who was part of the expedition team that discovered the skull of the "Peking Man." In his writings, he described his experience of the world as, "The Divine radiating from the depths of blazing Matter."[72]

In a Newsweek article titled "Is There Room for the Soul? Research into the biology of consciousness,"[73] the author gives a detailed review of the current debates regarding the science of consciousness. In it he states, "in recent years, the scientific study of consciousness has taken bold, if not always steady, steps in the direction of understanding the experience of wholeness and human spirituality in general." Peter Russell, an evolutionary theorist with a mathematics, physics and psychology background, authored the book *From Science to God.* In it he explains his views of science and spirituality this way, "Both science and spirituality are the search for truth. One is the search for the truths of the physical world; the other the search for the truth of the nature of consciousness. As such there is no conflict between them."[74]

Spiritual renaissance

In addition to all of the cultural influences we just discussed, we decided to do some self-reflection and draw from our own direct experiences related to spirituality. In the 1980s both of us had what we call "spiritual awakenings." For Debra it happened quite unexpectedly and changed her life entirely; for William it was more of a gradual, but conscious process. These awakenings did not happen in a religious context, yet over time they have given us tremendous insight regarding the true spirit of our religious upbringing. Our spiritual awakening has also brought us to a much broader understanding and respect for all of the world's religions and wisdom texts.

Throughout our work we have heard personal stories that are very similar to our own. People from all walks of life, in country after country around the world are having spiritual awakenings that are changing not only their lives, but their business and world views. It's as if the source for this context is

the multiplication of all the influences we have reviewed in the other three contexts, all conspiring with the "complexity consciousness" to evolve, and even revolutionize, our way of perceiving meaning and purpose in business. By revolutionize, we mean not only fundamental change, but a "revolution" of returning to where we started (like the revolution of the earth on its axis).

In this regard, Willis Harman, a futurist at Stanford Research Institute, former President of the Institute of Noetic Sciences and author of *Global Mind Change*, once wrote: "A re-spiritualization of society is taking place, but one more experiential and non-institutionalized, less fundamentalist and sacerdotal [priestly]." Harman's words accurately describe our experience as we have researched this *Spiritual-based* context.

We have witnessed an increased understanding and respect for diverse religions. In relation to spirituality in organizations, numerous research studies and articles are being written on this subject. For example, an article titled "The influence of religion-based workplace spirituality on business leaders' decision-making: An inter-faith study," articulates the results of a study with thirteen prominent Sri Lankan businessmen of four different faiths – Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity (Catholic and Protestant) and Muslem.[75] M. Kriger and V. Seng[76] used the study of five major religions to develop an integrative approach to organizational leadership in their journal article "Leadership with Inner Meaning." While we are still experiencing untold aggression in the name of religion around the world, it seems that business organizations may be a conduit for showing us how to find a common ground from which to connect and harmonize with each other.

And finally, there is a consistent and persistent increase in interest and initiatives associated with bringing together and synthesizing the best of the paradigms and spiritual worldviews of East and West in all areas of life, including business.

Throughout this entire exploration, one thing became strikingly apparent: everywhere we look we find books, articles, websites, conferences, policies and practices that support spirituality in the workplace, at both individual and organizational levels. Yet, there are no personalities like Taylor, Maslow, Deming, Taguchi, Senge, Forrester, or others who speak for the context. That is, rather than being able to identify specific leaders – as easily evident in the other contexts – it seems to be more a confluence of "personal" influences. Perhaps it's too early. Or perhaps that will be the nature of this context: that it's relatively "leaderless" and prompted more by an organic awakening of the many rather than depending on the strong leadership of a few.

Organizational drivers

<u>Eclectic practices</u>

Rather than finding one or two business gurus emerging as "the leaders or experts," we find an eclectic range of spiritual-based disciplines emerging in business. The underlying wisdom for these

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disciplines is being drawn from ancient spiritual texts around the world as well as from the individual worker and leader's personal spiritual experiences. As a result, this context seems to be driven more from an experiential, grassroots movement, rather than a top-down movement driven by science, religion or academics. It also seems to be shaped more by the individuals involved, rather than a "one-size fits all worldview."

In 2001, a group of four associations, the International Spirit at Work, Spirit in Business, World Business Academy, and European Baha'i Business Forum, came together and formulated an international award given to large organizations who had instituted explicit spiritual practices and policies in their organization. Today, 42 organizations, which have a presence in 37 different countries around the world, have been honored with this award. We searched through their archives[77] to see if we could find a general outline of the spiritual policies and practices these organizations around the world have instituted to date.

We list the overarching themes here, but have included the full list in Appendix A to show the eclectic nature of the practices that are emerging in this context.

- Meditation, contemplation, silence and self-reflection within the work environment
- Opportunities for selfless service within the organization, the business community and society
- Spiritual enrichment retreats, training, education and activities
- Spirituality-related organizational functions
- Spirituality-related organizational practices
- Creating an organizational culture based in spirituality
- Establishing on-going spiritual support
- Spirituality-related research activities

In this regard, two overarching concepts that have become popular so far in the research language are "workplace spirituality" and "spirituality in organizations." Numerous other concepts and disciplines related to this context have already arisen, but none have become popular norms used widely around the world. It will be interesting to see what happens as this context begins to mature. Will it remain eclectic and fluid in its disciplines that support meaning and purpose in business, or will it begin to coalesce around a more cohesive set of accepted disciplines?

Spiritual values

One person we know who has been working with large and small corporations around the world to empower their spiritual development is Richard Barrett, author of *Liberating the Corporate Soul.*[78] He has developed a model called "Seven Levels of Consciousness." The first three stages in his model represents stages in the emergence and development of the human ego (much like the popular model of Maslow), the middle stage is the transformation stage, and the last three stages represent stages in the emergence and development (or unfolding) of the human soul.

We know Barrett to be quite pragmatic in his approach to spiritual development in the business context, and he readily acknowledges, "This is not work for the timid of heart; the benefits of it are immeasurable. Yet it requires personal struggle. Only when you change internally will you see those benefits reflected in the outside world. You have to go through a process, and it's painful. You have to show up fearlessly."[79]

Selfless service, the highest level that Barrett has in his model, will become an important catalyst for bringing about this spiritual transcendence. By selfless service, we are meaning the act of serving from a spiritual motive, rather than a utilitarian or self-centered motive. In a small book titled *Vedanta in Action*,[80] the author speaks about selflessness and work, "Selflessness is the highest ideal of all religions, and where better can selflessness be practiced than in the midst of a demanding world? Indeed, working situations offer innumerable occasions to test and strengthen one's spiritual convictions and aspirations."

Thus, we believe as we awaken spiritually in our human development, which we are witnessing throughout the world, organizations will begin to create a spiritual purpose, with values based in spiritual consciousness and selfless service. From this will grow an "organizational conscience."

Ananth Raman, Chairman of Graphtex, Inc. in the USA explains the shift that took place between ethics, a prominent driver in the previous two contexts, and spirituality in his own leadership, "I was taught by my mother that these ethical values were the way to maintain order in society, so I naturally used them in my working experience over the last 30 years. But in the last 5 to 10 years as I have looked at things more spiritually, I discovered deeper values within each one of them. And then each one of them became stronger. I realized that it is not just a good business practice to be ethical. I am actually the same as everyone else, and we all come from the same Divinity."

Just as Ananth Raman spoke of, we believe that values based in a spiritual consciousness will also be the drivers for individual meaning and purpose in this context. While human values in the previous context will be an invaluable step to purifying and transforming us into a whole human being, we will now turn our attention to a Transcendent consciousness as the source of our meaning and motivation. As we seek to more fully understand just what spiritual values and fulfillment mean in our work, our personal sense of conscience, as well as the collective organizational conscience will play an important role in guiding our way.

Conscious capitalism

Patricia Aberdeen's views about innovation and wealth-creation in her book *Megatrends 2010: The Rise of Conscious Capitalism*,[81] illustrate the relevance this context has for business meaning and purpose.

> *We've reached the point in economic history where human consciousness – the capacity for quiet, detached observation – is the raw material of innovation and, ultimately, of corporate*

money making. Consciousness is now as valuable to business as mundane assets like capital, energy or even technology.

Aberdeen goes on to explain that when wealth is derived from a new source (which has evolved over the last 150 years from industry to information to knowledge) a new economic era is born. She believes that a new economic era is about to be born, which will be based on consciousness. Her description of consciousness is derived from a spiritual basis, "the awareness of awareness, presence, alertness, the willingness to observe without attachment, the gleam of Spirit that animates humanity."

In this *Spiritual-based* context, we now begin to evolve from transformation to transcendence, where "transcendence" does not mean "leaving something behind" but instead means "exceeding usual limits."[82] As this context begins to mature, the organizational drivers for meaning and purpose will begin to bring a Transcendent, spiritual consciousness to the forefront, while placing the material reality into its proper perspective. In this context, the nature of business will be directed toward contributing to the spiritual purpose of humanity.

As this context continues to mature, the role of governance and responsibility will evolve as workers and leaders awaken to the awareness that they as human beings share in the co-creative nature of the Transcendent. This will naturally fuel an evolution from compliance and commitment based on intrinsic motivations, to a conscious act of co-creating our world together.

The future of this context

As we have been researching and working within this context over the past 18 years, we have found three stages that organizations go through in their maturity process:

- Stage 1 is where organizations look at spirituality in terms of its ability to help them fulfill their organizational vision, mission, values and strategic goals as well as its utility to contribute to the bottom line. This is akin to bringing spirituality into the business context and measuring its value in business terms.
- Stage 2 is where organizations see spirituality and business more on equal terms and try to balance between the two, still with an eye on making sure that spirituality contributes to the organization's mission and the bottom line.
- Stage 3 is where organizations make spirituality their overarching context and the basis from which they do their organizational work, and place the financial results and goal achievements into their proper perspective as natural results rather than the driving goal.

While much of the current literature related to this context is still focused on Stages 1 and 2, from our own experience of researching, leading and working from a spiritual-basis, we have begun to catch glimpses of what business might look like operating from Stage 3. In closing we will share what we

can imagine the future of business might look like from this perspective. Please bring the future into the present with us…

Imagine for a moment… A world in which business leaders and workers have a deep sense of their spiritual roots and heritage… Where they feel a profound communion with the Source of creation, according to their understanding of that… Where they actively express their spirituality in every aspect of their lives, including work… Where they see business as an opportunity to deepen their spiritual journey as they serve others… where they feel whole and fulfilled, with nothing lacking; they have nothing to achieve in order to feel valued, and they do not look to the "results" or "position titles" for their self-worth.

Business professionals are aware of wrong-doing within themselves, in others around them, and in the world. However, they see it as a reflection of ignorance, separateness, and a suffering mind. They do not shy away from facing or addressing it, and do so from a basis of love and compassion. They intrinsically know when and how to act, and take firm action, when necessary, without fear, blame, or make-wrong.

Wealth is not something that can be gained or lost; it is a sound, healthy, and prosperous state of well being from which character, health, education, and money are created. When the intentions for creating wealth are sourced from a Transcendent consciousness and are consciously co-created from that source, the resources (time, money, talent, and energy) required to fulfill those intentions will naturally be available.

The relationship that business professionals have with the past and future shifts as they now operate in the present moment. They are aware of the implications of their actions in "this lifetime" as well as "beyond this lifetime" and expand their scope of leadership and work to include both. Rather than "react and learn" from past mistakes and successes, or fantasize and desire for the future, they are aware that they share in the co-creative nature of the Transcendent and thus keep their focus on what they are consciously choosing to create.

Business professionals are not bound by time, money, physical circumstances, or mental constructs. They become "masters of time, money, matter, and mind" and use them as wise expressions of their spiritual consciousness. "Deadlines" and "due dates" are replaced with "consciously designed visions of spiritual purpose" that let them know when something is "complete." The time it takes to fulfill a specific task, project, or mission is considered a "natural result," rather than a driving force.

As business professionals become more and more conscious of the spiritual nature of all of life, the distinction between theology and the study of business becomes less and less. This is testified to by Bob Galvin,[83] chairman of the executive committee on Motorola's board of directors, who once described the primary job of leaders as:

Inspiring acts of faith ("things are do-able that are not necessarily provable"), spreading hope, and building trust.

When a VP asked how these values relate to the "real world of business," Galvin replied that executives must develop strong character in themselves and others, not just good technical or financial skills. Then he concluded:

Faith, hope, and trust... Theology is very practical business.

Wisdom and limitations within the *Spiritual-based* context

The *Spiritual-based* context arose in the 1990s. The drivers, disciplines and concepts related to this context are just now emerging in the field of business and could take many decades to attain a fully mature consciousness for meaning and purpose in business. In reflecting upon the wisdom we've gained from this context so far, we acknowledge the value we can derive from it moving forward:

- The importance of bringing a transcendent awareness to business and becoming conscious co-creators of our future
- The importance of providing a deeper sense of self-awareness and decision making for governing the global economy beyond consumerism and towards conscious capitalism

In contrast, we can acknowledge the limitations of this context:

- In the near term, there is a fear of introducing spirituality in the workplace due to the evangelical need of some religions to convert others to their beliefs

Table 7: Cultural influences that gave rise to the *Spiritual-based* context:

First emerged:	1990s
Cultural influences:	Individual spiritual awakening Growing paradox of externalizing vs. internalizing consciousness Interfaith initiatives Business leaders practices Academic research Science and spirituality
Purpose of business:	Fulfill the spiritual purpose of humanity with service to society
Basis of meaning and purpose:	Spiritual fulfillment
Recognized basis of meaning:	Source (consciousness)
Views about the nature of workers:	Human beings share in the co-creative nature of the Transcendent

Table 8: Organizational Drivers and Disciplines for the *Spiritual-based* context:

Organizational drivers:	Selfless service and spiritual fulfillment
Individual drivers:	Spiritual values
Organizational compass:	Organizational conscience
Individual compass:	Conscience
Organizational structure:	Energy flow of spirit
Organizational disciplines:	Policies and practices explicitly based on spiritual principles Sacro-secular symbiosis Spirinomics Holism Business ashram
Approach to governance:	Conscious co-creation
Human capability most focused on:	Higher nature and innate knowing

IN SUMMARY

Four distinct contexts for meaning and purpose in business have emerged in the last 150 years: *Rationalist, Humanistic, Wholistic, and Spiritual-based*. As shown in Tables 9-10, each context has been influenced by diverse cultural perspectives and events, and has given rise to an extensive range of drivers for meaning and purpose, corporate governance approaches, as well as business disciplines and concepts.

	Rationalist	*Humanistic*	*Wholistic*	*Spiritual-based*
Table 9: Cultural influences that gave rise to each context:				
First emerged:	Mid 1800s	1950s	1980s	1990s
Cultural influences:	Protestant work ethic Shinto work ethic Industrial revolution	Post war reconstruction Information technology Materialistic prosperity Search for meaning and purpose in life	Pressure Consciousness	Individual spiritual awakening Growing paradox of externalizing vs. internalizing consciousness Interfaith initiatives Business leaders practices Academic research Science and spirituality
Purpose of business:	Meet basic needs of society Wealth-creation for owners	Shared wealth-creation Find a need and fill it	Make a meaningful contribution to society and the environment	Fulfill the spiritual purpose of humanity with service to society
Basis of meaning and purpose:	Economic strength Discipline	Actualization (Self and Collective)	Well-being for all	Spiritual fulfillment
Recognized basis of meaning:	Societal beliefs and assumptions	Paradigms (mindsets)	Systems (contexts)	Source (consciousness)
Views about the nature of workers:	Need structure and controls	People have different needs and are motivated to actualize their potential	People can be self-organizing and self-motivating	Human beings share in the co-creative nature of the Transcendent

	Rationalist	Humanistic	Wholistic	Spiritual-based
Table 10: Organizational Drivers and Disciplines for each context:				
Organizational drivers:	Organizational objectives	Mission Organizational culture	Organizational vision Higher purpose	Selfless service and spiritual fulfillment
Individual drivers:	Work ethic	Personal values	Human values	Spiritual values
Organizational compass:	Strength of business network Financial accounting Productivity measures	Organizational values Business ethics	Universal principles and laws Triple bottom line Whole Bottom Line	Organizational conscience
Individual compass:	Deontology – the duty to follow the rightness of an action	Morality	Character	Conscience
Organizational structure:	Military-style hierarchy	Matrixed	Flexible, networked "ecosystem"	Energy flow of spirit
Organizational disciplines:	Productivity management Personnel management	Participative management (MBO) Human resources Organizational development and transformation Empowerment	Organization transformation Learning organization Corporate social responsibility Stakeholder focus Sustainability Knowledge management	Policies and practices explicitly based on spiritual principles Sacro-secular symbiosis Spirinomics Holism Business ashram
Approach to governance:	Compliance	Compliance and commitment	Intrinsic motivation	Conscious co-creation
Human capability most focused on:	Physical	Mental-Emotional	Intuitive intelligence	Higher nature and innate knowing

SELF-INQUIRY QUESTIONS

We end with a series of questions to you, the reader, to take into your own introspection and your own dialogues with your friends, family, and colleagues.

- When you examine your thoughts, words, and actions, from which context would you say you primarily draw from day-to-day?

- Is this the same context that you most aspire to?

- If not, what do you need to shift in your day-to-day viewpoint in order to more fully embrace and put into practice this other context?

- What context do you believe the leaders and workers in your organization primarily draw from day-to-day?

- How well do you "fit in" with this context, given your own viewpoint?

- To the degree there is a difference, how could you bring out the strengths of each context into a harmonious way of working together?

- What are the implications of the four contexts on global economic development?

- What are the implications of the four contexts on the environmental health of the planet?

- What are the implications of the four contexts on sustainable business performance?

APPENDIX A – EXAMPLES OF SPIRITUAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN ORGANIZATIONS

This Appendix contains the spiritual policies and practices that have been implemented in businesses around the world. This information has been derived from the International Spirit at Work[84] awards program that includes 42 organizations with presence in 37 countries.

Meditation, contemplation, silence and self-reflection within the work environment:
- Meditation programs
- Quiet rooms where employees can contemplate in silence during the workday
- Regular introspection into personal spiritual values
- Scheduled days for self-reflection
- Time for prayer or self-reflection as a regular part of meetings or programs
- Opportunities for silence
- Self-reflection training
- Yoga and meditation from renowned experts

Opportunities for selfless service within the organization, the business community and society:
- Community service
- Promoting service to humanity through work
- Providing spiritual guidance to the business community
- Practices that nurture the human spirit in customers and people in the community
- "Food for Thought" programs to provide inspiration to an organization's broader community

Spiritual enrichment retreats, training, education and activities:
- Spirituality symposium
- Spiritual retreats
- Spiritual enrichment and education activities
- Spiritual leadership institute training program
- Higher ground spiritual retreats
- Mindfulness learning modules
- Healing and compassionate care retreats that include topics such as: the difference between spirituality and religion; how to honor all spiritual traditions; and how to find meaning and purpose in life
- Renewal experience retreats
- "Food for Shepherds Program" that includes retreats and experiential contemplative prayer
- Courses for integrating body, mind and spirit
- Self-mastery training programs
- Spiritual training through spiritual masters of multiple faiths provided to employees and the community
- Search for meaning and spirituality retreat program
- Consciousness training

- Year-long Mission Minded Person program that includes spiritual practice and exploration
- International Institute of Inner Sciences focused on spiritual training that draws on spiritual masters of diverse faiths

Spirituality-related organizational functions:
- Establishment of a spiritual-care steering committee
- Vice President of Spiritual Care to oversee a spiritual environment of caring for every stakeholder
- A team that helps clients and employees deal with the spiritual connection to life and death issues
- A Stewardship program which embraces four key principles: honoring reflection – including taking time to set a spiritual context for business; valuing others; going beyond self interest; and embracing responsibility and ownership
- Establishment of a Spiritual Services Function
- Spiritual Journeying Council – an interdisciplinary team responsible for creating and disseminating workplace spirituality programs

Spirituality-related organizational practices:
- Spirituality scorecard
- Encourage open discourse about spirituality honoring all faiths and beliefs
- Celebrating spirituality in the every day workings of the business
- Having a company prayer that is spoken regularly (some are based on a specific religion, others are considered "all-religious")
- A paid "spiritual day" off
- Practicing the removal of fear from the workplace and replacing it with spirit and values
- Practices that nurture the human spirit in employees
- Acknowledging Divine Prominence for the success of the organization
- An "Inviting Creativity/Spirituality Into the Workplace" pilot project
- Department directors meet weekly to spend thirty minutes in reflection and thirty minutes in dialogue concerning some aspect of spirituality in the management culture
- A focus on the expansion of human consciousness at work
- An organizational practice of trying to harness a spiritual state, a transpersonal space, beyond individual ego, and use it in day-to-day work, governance and management practices
- Seeing the customer as God
- Compassionate conversation series
- A practice of singing together
- Forum for employees to share what gives them meaning in their work
- Annual publication called "Sacred Stories" with testimonies and vignettes about how spiritual meaning is found in the exercixse of one's daily responsibilities
- Measuring the invisible by recognizing the inner self that employees bring to work
- Spiritual intranet portal

- Employee meetings to reinforce that every employee and the whole enterprise stands in a bigger context and that all are part of the creation
- Dramas, plays and skits that reinforce the importance and practice of spiritual values at work

Creating an organizational culture based in spirituality:
- Creating a culture of "sangha" – meaning a community of spiritual practitioners
- Creating a culture that instills: Every human can become divine light
- Spirituality as an attribute in the leadership model
- Whole heart and mind program
- A commitment to creating a work environment shaped by the spiritual qualities of health, healing, hope, diversity, and mutual respect
- Creating a culture that emphasizes caring, truth and personal spiritual growth
- Creating a culture where employees can transcend the limited ego
- Leaders are encouraged to develop the "spiritual force" within themselves
- Upholding core values of: accepting people as they are, living in the present, responsibility and commitment, open communication, love and compassion
- Creating a culture where work is not differentiated between spirituality
- Creating a "culture grounded in spirituality" that is then incorporated into the strategic planning efforts and operational performance goals
- Upholding core values of: trustworthiness, respect, justice, service, humility, team spirit, self-motivation, and family unity
- Leadership principles that include higher spirit, inner personal attitude, and the spiritual dimension
- Infrastructure that supports employees in their wholeness (body, mind, spirit, choices, relationships and emotional health)
- Upholding a purpose for the organization as one of "inspiring the soul"

Establishing on-going spiritual support:
- Spiritual Resource Liaisons for linking spiritual needs of peers with spiritual resources
- Encourage personal spiritual practices
- Partners in Caring program where employees help each other through tough times
- Onsite religious services
- Expressive arts program that helps employees express their spirituality
- Altar space for work teams
- Spiritual quotations from all major faith traditions and other wisdom teachers in each employee's day planner, in the elevators, and in every team meeting room
- Helping employees to catalyze their latent divinity
- Chaplain services program for employees
- Pastoral care and counseling for employees
- Corporate participation in the National Day of Prayer
- Life Learning Center that supports the integration of mind, body and spirit

- "In the eye of the storm" and "crucial conversations" programs based in a spiritual foundation
- A column on spirituality that highlights the importance of being spiritual everyday and provides spiritual guidance to people from all religions
- Helping people become a master of their own destiny

Spirituality-related research activities:
- Researching the effects of spirituality in the workplace
- Capabilities Awareness Profile that helps to measure the outcomes of spiritual programs
- A study on the "Impact of spiritual methods" such as: yoga, meditation and breath control

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