



PUT YOUR SPIRITUALITY TO WORK

Conversation Starters for the Workplace

3.21 A SPIRITUALLY NOURISHING WORKPLACE

The Philippines-based Planters Development Bank is an organisation whose leaders recognise and nurture the spiritual aspirations of their employees and everyone else they touch in the course of their business.

IN OUR WORLD TODAY, many working people have a desire to make spirituality a more explicit part of their work, but are struggling to figure out how. As a result, they typically focus their spiritual growth more on their personal life, rather than their work life.

Yet more than ever, we are finding business organisations whose leaders recognise and nurture the spiritual aspirations of their employees and everyone else they touch in the course of their business. One such organisation is Planters Development Bank in Manila, Philippines, whose President and Chief Operating Officer is Floy Aguenza.

Plantersbank, as it is commonly called, was one of ten organisations world-wide to receive the “International Spirit at Work Award”¹. Here’s how they define spirituality for their organisation:

At Planters Development Bank, we define spirituality as the essence of one’s person – the divine and the human qualities present in each one of us. It is the working together of these qualities which shape who we are and connect us to our Supreme Creator.

Spirituality is our inner being – heart, soul and spirit- which gives greater meaning and purpose to our daily work and helps to transform our community into a better place to live through respect and love for others. We believe that spirituality behoves us to act in the best interest of the institution and of all the stakeholders.

As you can imagine, a spiritual environment can and does have a valuable impact on those who work there. Rhodora Batalla, an employee of Plantersbank, wrote a letter describing the influence this environment has had on her life:

When I was younger, I used to live a life full of spirituality. For more than 10 years, I was a member of the choir in our church and actively participated in all our parish activities. I focused myself on knowing, loving and serving God. During those years my family and the church were my life.

¹ To learn more about other recipients of the International Spirit at Work award, please visit: www.spiritatwork.org.

When I graduated from college, I got busy looking for a job and when I finally had one I got busy at work which took all my time. Nevertheless, I didn't lose the hope that one day I would find my way back... Then I joined Plantersbank in 2003, a bank full of spiritual life... I'm very thankful to be a part of the bank which encourages employees to get closer to God. Now, I can say, that I'm starting to live the life I used to live before: A life where God is the center of everything.

The organisation culture at Plantersbank has the theme "Whole Heart and Mind", reflecting its character as a caring organisation that is committed to serving small and medium enterprises. This sector is often unserved by large financial institutions because it is considered more costly, risky and difficult to lend to. However, they chose to focus on this sector because of their determination to make an impact where it is needed most:

We take pride in the fact that we are aligning ourselves with an indispensable force for our country's economic development. Through our support to the small and medium enterprises (SMEs), there is always an overarching objective of supporting an often neglected sector and contributing in a vital way to national progress... not only doing business and making a profit.

Being a recipient of numerous awards and citations for the past ten years, Plantersbank has also been asked to share their knowledge and experience with other developing countries through training and consultancies. They are very clear about the role of spirituality in their success:

We have always attributed all our successes to the hard work and dedication of the men and women of Plantersbank, the support and confidence of our clients, and the help of the Almighty. Our leaders are very explicit in their acknowledgment of Divine Providence in making all these things happen.

It is not surprising, therefore, that spirituality in the work place is a way of life in Plantersbank. Our leaders' spirituality is embedded in the way they deal with people, whether clients, employees or friends.

So, ask yourself: *How can I influence my organisation to support the spiritual growth of everyone it touches?*

This article is an excerpt from the book, *Put Your Spirituality to Work: Spiritual-Based Leaders*. To download the full book of articles, as well as additional book chapters, articles, workbooks, and research on the subject of "spirituality and human values for leadership and work", visit our website: www.globaldharma.org