

AMT EVENTS



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

10

Outcomes and the
Clinical Laboratory

*The importance of
outcome studies*

ALSO

12

Part 2:

The Business
of Kindness

Official publication of

AMT American 
Medical
Technologists
Allied Health Professionals

The Business of Kindness – Part 2

No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted. – AESOP

Olivia McIvor

“
...Planting the
seeds of kindness
in business is a
proactive
approach that is
aimed at
enhancing the
health and
sustainability of
the people within
our organizations.”

In the first article in this series, I planted the seed of "kindness in business" as a simple concept to provide a solution to the complex and serious challenges we face daily in our work. It is precisely this simplicity that allows kindness such power and magnitude to affect change at all levels within individuals and organizations.

Kindness is something that each person knows how to do and can appreciate across all cultures, religions, genders and age barriers. Regardless of how independent our job description might state we are required to be, we are each still a colorful thread interwoven into the fabric of a team environment. I assume no one reading this article does not yearn for a deeper connection while at work, or to have the experience of joy and exuberance of seeing the positive results of a collaborative effort.

Many individuals believe that kindness is a "soft and fluffy" ideal that hasn't earned a rightful place in the tough world of hard-core bottom line business. The truth is, kindness is powerful beyond measure. It is also the one sustainable element that inspires individuals to develop connection, compassion and community in the workplace.

A recent survey by Towers Perrin, involving 85,000 employees worldwide, concluded that only 1 out of 7 employees are engaged in their work and willing to go the extra mile. A startling statistic, one that reminds us that something is greatly amiss within our organizations and teams.

During speaking engagements about the changing landscape of business, I will often compare the people in our organizations to oranges; it's a great visual. Think for a moment about an orange, with its beautiful gleaming skin, bursting with sweet flavor and juice inside. What happens when you squeeze it?

The obvious answer is that you get orange juice. Squeezing brings out the fundamental nature of the orange. In these times of rapid change, when we are squeezing our organizations through downsizing, mergers, increased workloads and continuously shifting directions to remain competitive, it is important to ask these questions regarding people:

- What happens when you squeeze your department, your people, your benefits & recognition programs?
- What do you see coming out?
- What do you want to see coming out?
- And, most important, how can we use these challenges as a tool to create deeper engagement between the organization and the people within it?

The human spirit, both in the individual sense and as a collective consciousness, has proven its ability to rise to the challenge and meet constant demands. Throughout history, there has always been an increased need for flexibility, creativity and perseverance to deliver performance and results. To accomplish this under pressure while being squeezed, one requires a courageous temperament combined with unrivaled passion and

purpose. I don't believe that anyone gets up in the morning intending to go to work and do an inadequate job any more than the so-called organization intends to put employees in harm's way. However, perhaps we need to speak more openly and honestly about courage and inner-strength building when we are being squeezed by external influences. In my experience, we tend to close our eyes and not discuss the critical issues facing us that would give people the skills to survive these times as a team and triumph.

Using kindness as a core value and driver

Planting the seeds of kindness in business is a proactive approach that is aimed at enhancing the health and sustainability of the people within our organizations. We need to find unique ways to counteract the increasing and often subtle forms of stress, disengagement and even potential violence. As we all know, stress leads us down a pathway to poor collegial relationships and eventually the potential of creating a toxic work environment.

Consider providing support for a kinder workplace in all or one of these three key themes:

Kindness to Oneself: Nurturing the Human Spirit

This theme includes self-care, resilience and nurturing of one's inner spirit. By beginning with self-worth and building a strong foundation, one is then capable of expressing kindness to others. The journey begins with self.

Kindness to Colleagues: Creating a Circle of Friends

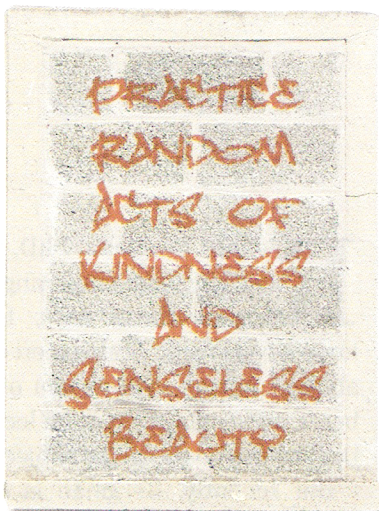
This theme focuses on treating others with mutual care and respect. It fosters teamwork and looking out for one another through establishing friendships in the workplace. We then can invite others into our circle of positive influence.

Kindness in the Community: Sustaining our Capacity to Thrive

This theme looks at making a difference locally and globally through community service. It encourages people to expand their kindness efforts beyond their immediate life and work by giving freely of themselves for others. In giving we receive back.

So here is a starting point ...

When was the last time you committed a random act of kindness in the workplace? I warmly challenge you to commit an act of kindness in one of the three kindness themes in the next 48 hours. ■



*In the next article in this four part series, Olivia McIvor will discuss the **12 Character Building Traits** needed to create a kinder and more respectful workplace. Look for it in the June issue of AMT Events.*

Reprinted with permission of the author.

Olivia McIvor is a senior consultant and retreat leader with The Izzo Group in Canada (www.theizzogroup.com). Her book, *The Business of Kindness: Creating Work Environments Where People Grow* (Fairwinds Press 2006) is available internationally.