

# HOW TO CREATE A MOST LOVED WORKPLACE

There are many people in today's work world who don't even like their workplace, much less love it. However, hope for improvement may come from a new research report with an intriguing title: *Creating a Most Loved Workplace*. The report is created by Louis Carter of Best Practice Institute. BPI was founded by social/organizational psychologist, entrepreneur, and investor Carter in 2001.

In describing the research, Carter says:

Love of workplace or Most Loved Workplace (MLW) is the intersection of intense feelings toward aspects of a company, perception of how your company feels about you, and attitudes toward respect and treatment. Our study proves that intense amorous feelings for the workplace are a greater predictor of organizational outcomes such as organizational commitment and perceived willingness to produce more for the company.

Besides organizational commitment, Carter points to workplace-related psychological concepts such as organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) and psychological safety. He says, "these constructs represent key employee outcomes in relation to their companies, and the MLW is strongly related to each, suggesting that individuals who score positively on the MLW will be higher in commitment, innovation, and OCBs."

Yet even with the best intentions, dysfunction and worse can result from the mixture and interactions of different personalities within the same workplace. "Human and system dysfunction," according to Carter,

is a reality for most intact or stranger groups if left alone without intervention or treatment. We have proven that cynicism, doubt, fear, and other personality traits that focus on neurotic behavior

are shown to have counterproductive outcomes to an organization, team, or interpersonal system. Intact teams can take on many forms of dysfunction or function based on the system type and predominance of specific behaviors within those teams.

For more information on the latter, Carter recommends the 2012 Jossey-Bass book *Reading the Room: Group Dynamics for Coaches and Leaders*, by David Kantor.

"Our study," Carter continues,

provides ground rules that allow different team system types to become more open, structured, innovative, or synchronous based on a core of respect and living values that the company espouses. For example, if a system is too rigid, it requires more open tactics such as round-robin questions or a voting system which are perceived as providing more respect for individual's "air-time" and beliefs—and our core research shows that when there is respect for one's ideas, as well as collaboration, dysfunctional behavior is less likely to occur.

The BPI report mentions the disparity between giving and getting respect. That raises the question: How can people be made more aware of the crucial nature of giving respect as well as getting it, no matter what position they have in the workplace? Carter says,

at the core of every relationship that progresses to the most productive outcomes is respect. Balance and achievement is gained through a respect for the diverse perspectives and polarities that make us all unique. Without respect for these differences, there cannot be progress. In the study, we asked over two hundred fifty people how they defined respect. Over three-fourths of the people defined respect with regard to being respected rather than respecting others. Upon deeper investigation, we found that people thought they deserved respect more than they should respect others. These people reported they did not feel respect from others in their working environment.

As a treatment for this, Carter recommends “open dialogue that supports critical and respectful listening. Open listening, clear ground rules and balanced air time allows individuals to open their minds to alternatives.”

The report notes the idea of respect as a form of currency, and one that is free. Employing that sort of terminology may bring the message home in a more tangible way, perhaps in similarity to ideas like social capital and human capital.

Carter contends,

as more leaders and candidates become proficient in the Art and Science of Respect, the higher the demand will be for this human capital. And, respect as a social currency has been proven by our top interview subjects as a key indicator of success. Providing help to someone or their family, understanding in times of distress, caring and connecting to the person, giving equal airtime, and being a support and friend are all forms of currency. In a world where coaching, counseling, and therapy go well beyond \$200 per hour, we should look to the free forms of respect currency that are abundant around all of us. Look no further than your colleagues, trusted advisors, clients, and family members for help and advice. The first step though is to give the advice—and give of yourself as a servant leader. In order to create social capital, you must give social capital. And, those who do so are more likely to attract great human capital, develop human capital, get better work outcomes, and be in greater demand from the best talent.

## THE IMPLICATIONS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP AT WORK

What does it really mean to take ownership over your work, or the job that you perform? To what extent do you regard the organization you work for as “yours”? Such questions are the concerns of what’s known as *psychological ownership*, a relatively small but growing field of scholarly inquiry. Although the construct is much wider than its applicability within the world of work, the work setting for this concept of ownership has become a robust segment of study.

An important way to learn more about how psychological ownership has been studied and described is to read the article “Psychological Ownership: A Review and Research Agenda,” in *Journal of Organizational Behavior* (2017), by Sarah Dawkins, Amy Wei Tian, Alexander Newman, and Angela Martin, who all teach at Australian universities. Dawkins is a lecturer in management at the Tasmanian School of Business and Economics, University of Tasmania. Tian is senior lecturer in human resources management in the School of Management at Curtin Business School. Newman is a professor in the Department of Management at Deakin Business School, Deakin University. Martin is Associate Professor in Management, Tasmanian School of Business and Economics, University of Tasmania.

In characterizing the findings of their article, especially as it relates to the workplace, Newman says that the authors

reviewed prior research to determine what led employees to feel greater psychological ownership over their job and organization, and whether psychological ownership led employees to