

## **Deck the Halls with High Performance: Converting Holiday Spirit into Spiritual Intelligence**

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Even in arduous economic times, the holidays typically bring a spirit of self-reflection, rejuvenation and peace. By embracing this spirit, companies can guide their employees toward higher individual and team performance, greater productivity and a sustained boost in efficiency throughout the year.

The holiday spirit brings with it a renewed focus on working together, helping each other, generosity, seeing the best in one another, compassion, respecting others and opening ourselves up to trust. While all these attributes frame the season of giving, they're also the very same qualities we see in high performing employees and teams. In 1997, Danah Zohar coined the term "spiritual intelligence" and later in 2000, with colleague Ian Marshall, she published *SQ: Ultimate Intelligence*. By Zohar and Marshall's definition, "Spiritual Intelligence is the intelligence with which we access our deepest meanings, purposes, and highest motivations."

Having worked with over 100 public, private and non-profit organizations in the last five years ranging from small businesses and middle market companies to Fortune 500 and multinational organizations, we at Change & Response Strategies have observed spiritual intelligence at work in many environments. Employees and organizational leaders with the highest degree of spiritual intelligence or "SQ" (as in IQ or EQ) are typically flexible and highly adaptive, respect diversity, appreciate even the most painful lessons learned and the mistakes they make, are accountable, compassionate, and comfortable sharing their knowledge, information and experiences. They are inspired and seek to be inspiring, have a high degree of self-awareness, often exercise consequential and critical thinking skills and demonstrate an understanding of how even seemingly unrelated areas within the organization are ultimately connected. Certainly, it doesn't take an industrial psychologist to map the correlation between employees possessing even some of these characteristics and the positive impact on the organization and its bottom line.

As we glide swiftly into the holidays and ramp up to the New Year, organizational leaders are evaluating the past 12 months and projecting for the year ahead. Amidst the year-end wrap up are the holiday parties, achievement dinners, and charitable company initiatives like toy drives and fundraisers. What an opportune time for executive leaders to communicate to employees that the attributes of sharing, compassion and respect are not exclusive to the holiday season but are part of the core values held as essential by the organization; and that flexibility, self-awareness and understanding that each of us is part of something greater than ourselves are fundamental to the professional development and success of every employee.

After the holidays have passed and the year moves into full swing, take every opportunity at meetings, during performance appraisals, at company outings, while traveling with your team to reinforce the importance of spiritual intelligence and its correlation to peak performance,

productivity and efficiency - - and most importantly, how spiritual intelligence affords them the gift of balance and inner peace.