

**EEE/EXTREME EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT  
VISIBLE MORAL LEADERSHIP/A FULLTIME RESPONSIBILITY, NOT AN OPTION  
HARD (NUMBERS/PLANS) IS SOFT. SOFT (RELATIONSHIPS/CULTURE) IS HARD.  
EXTREME HUMANIZATION/PRODUCT-SERVICE DIFFERENTIATOR #1  
EXCELLENCE IS THE NEXT FIVE MINUTES**

*“[Business has the] responsibility to increase the sum total of human well-being.”—Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi*  
*“Business has to give people enriching, rewarding lives ... or it’s simply not worth doing.”—Richard Branson*  
*“The role of the director is to create a space where actors and actresses can be more than they have ever been before, more than they have ever dreamed of being.”—Robert Altman*  
*“Your customers will never be any happier than your employees.”—John DiJulius*  
*“He said for him the craft of building a boat was like a religion. You had to surrender yourself to it spiritually. When you were done, you had to feel that you had left a piece of yourself behind in it forever, a bit of your heart.”*  
*—The Boys in the Boat, on George Yoeman Pocock, racing shell designer-builder extraordinaire*

**AGENDA/ENTERPRISE EXCELLENCE 2019:**

- \***EEE/EXTREME EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT.** The sine qua non for all that follows. “Double down” on employee investment—play offense, not defense, to respond to tech-mad-job-obliterated. Note: This employee engagement axiom applies to 100% of job slots, including part-timers. (And: In the spirit of the above, *ban* the term “HR.” My colleagues are *not* “human resources,” [not “assets”]; they are Ruth, Dick ...) (And: “People First” is Strategy #1 for long-term success.)
- \***MBWA/MANAGING BY WANDERING AROUND.** “MBWA” is code for managers/leaders in touch with—communion with—those who do the work. *Leaders/managers literally desperate for their team members to succeed and make a small “dent in the universe”;* managers/leaders who avidly live “people first.” (*Helping others succeed = Human Aspiration #1.*)
- \***CULTURAL DIFFERENTIATORS:** Bedrock: **RESPECT.** Leader Trait #1: “**FIERCE**” LISTENING. Hiring/E.g.: “**EMPATHY**”/“**GOOD PEOPLE**”/“**NO JERKS.**” Investment #1: **TRAINING.** Asset #1: **OUR 1<sup>ST</sup>-LINE MANAGERS.**
- \***PRINCIPLE #1/40 YEARS/6-WORDS: “HARD IS SOFT. SOFT IS HARD.”** Hard (plans, numbers) is soft (abstractions). Soft (relationships/culture) is hard (embedded). (E.g., Google gets a “soft” surprise: BigData re top employees/most innovative teams: “Soft stuff” reigns. Top eight traits: Interpersonal/“soft” skills/#1-7; STEM last/#8. Message: EQ>IQ.)
- \***INVEST FOR THE LONG-TERM/SHARE THE WEALTH/END 50 YEARS OF ECONOMIC/SOCIAL DEVASTATION WROUGHT BY SLAVISH DEVOTION TO SHAREHOLDER VALUE MAXIMIZATION.** 94% of big public-company earnings (50%/1970) go to share repurchase/dividends enriching the rich—leaving a puny 6% for R&D/employee growth and well-being. FYI: *Analyses show companies investing for the long-term dramatically outperform quarterly profit maximizers.*
- \***UNFLINCHING MORAL RESPONSIBILITY AS A FRONT, CENTER, AND VISIBLE OBSESSION—ONE DAY AND ONE DECISION AT A TIME.** The benefits of an always visible moral touchstone accrue to oneself, our mates, our clientele, vendors, our communities. (And: *you can look in a mirror and tell yourself you have tried to make the world a little bit better.*)
- \***“I (TP) WILL NOT SERVE ON BOARDS WITH <50% WOMEN.”** Board gender balance pays (McKinsey: +56% operating profit). More/Unassailable research: Women are more effective leaders/negotiators/investors than men. (And: Women = Market #1/principal purchasers of *everything.*) (And/U.S.A.: \$22 trillion wealth transfer to women 2015–2020.)
- \***EXTREME HUMANIZATION OF PRODUCTS/SERVICES VIA INJECTION OF “ARTS THINKING”/SPIRITUALITY INTO ALL WE DO.** Emotionally connective design is the enterprise. Cases/Laurene Jobs: “*Steve and Jony [Ives] would discuss corners for hours and hours*”; review/MINI Cooper S, “*No car has provoked more smiles*”; Thomas Merton on the “*peculiar grace of a Shaker chair*”: “*made by someone capable of believing an angel might come and sit on it.*” Humanization/Small>>Big/Henry Clay: “*Courtesies of a small and trivial character are the ones which strike deepest in the grateful and appreciating heart.*” Axiom: *Distinction by Extreme Humanization is Core Competence #1, least likely to be matched by AI.*
- \***SMEs ROCK & RULE.** The hell with the job-destroying-tech-gaga-short-term-obsessed giants. *Small- and Medium-size Enterprises create virtually all the new jobs and are architects of almost all innovation.* In terms of citizens’ vocations and community and national health, we are our SMEs. Action: Encourage/support SMEs every way imaginable. (SME Excellence Mantra/courtesy George Whalin, *Retail Superstars*: “Be the best. It’s the only market that’s not crowded.”)
- \***PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION (BUSINESS, LAW, ENGINEERING, MEDICINE, ETC.) RADICALLY RE-TOOLED TO REFLECT THE ABOVE.** Professional education must acknowledge the primacy of developing people and moral leadership as a daily preoccupation. (Step #1/MBAs: The Master of Business Administration becomes the Master of Business Arts.)
- \***EXCELLENCE. PERIOD.** *In the end, EXCELLENCE is the only acceptable standard—for our products and services, for our relationships and the care and development of our employees, for our role in our community and in society at large.* TTD Now: *Excellence is not an “aspiration” or a “mountain to be climbed.” Excellence is the next five minutes. (Or not.)*

**CASE STUDY**  
**EXTREME HUMANIZATION/BREATH TAKING RESULTS**  
**POSTER-CHILD OF *THE EXCELLENCE DIVIDEND***

**THE COMMERCE BANK/METRO BANK MANTRA\***

*“Are you going to cost cut your way to prosperity? Or are you going to spend your way to prosperity?”*

*“Over-invest in our people, over-invest in our facilities.”*

*“Cost cutting is a death spiral. Our whole story is growing revenue.”*

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\*Success indicator: Commerce Bank in the U.S. came first. Founder Vernon Hill eventually sold Commerce to TD Bank for a whopping \$8.6 billion. Metro, in the UK, was its successor. Metro’s hands-on, “Get ’em *in* the branches,” and turn them into “Fans” strategy features beautiful facilities, long hours (e.g., open until midnight on Fridays), turned on staffers living up to Metro’s “Yes Bank” credo—and dog biscuits given away by the million. Commerce/Metro bottom line: *Literally millions of customers migrating from [being liberated from] traditional banks.* (Bonus: *Commerce/Metro at last count has created 17,000 good new stable jobs—while the traditionalists were abandoning branches and hemorrhaging thousands upon thousands of jobs.*) (Read more in Vernon Hill’s scintillating book, *FANS Not Customers: How to Create Growth Companies in a No Growth World.*)