

BUSINESS,
FAITH,
& ETHICS:
A FRAMEWORK FOR
DECISION-MAKING



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“We act on what we believe more than on what we know,” writes Sandi Krakowski, CEO and Founder of A Real Change International, for Entrepreneur magazine.¹

While this principle is true of most individuals in business, not just C-level leadership, it is even more important to note for executives.

Possessing strong convictions can be a true asset when leading an organization, and perhaps no leader is more guided by conviction than he who is deeply committed to personal faith.

Although faith-informed leadership is an ideal – not a given – for even the best leaders, those who consistently act out of integrity and excellence benefit their organizations in a multitude of ways.

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1

One hallmark of a faith-motivated leader is the inclination to be 'humbly confident.' While this may seem like a contradiction, leaders who are truly compelled by their faith are confident in their beliefs and the decisions that emerge from them, yet humble in submitting to God's will.

"You can't expect others to consider you a leader unless you have a solid faith in your ideas," Matei Gavril, CEO of PR Media Online, tells Forbes.² "Leadership is all about being passionate about what you do and having confidence in yourself and your followers whom you have to motivate and inspire."

Having strong confidence in their own beliefs as well as the organization's mission makes leaders dependable, consistent, and trustworthy and helps inspire confidence among the broader team.

The confidence of faith-driven leaders, though, should be balanced with a sense of humility, as they are ultimately dedicated to the greater cause of serving God and submitting to His will above their own.

Faith-driven leaders do not consider themselves more important than others, and they value their employees as people. They consider Jesus' example, as he was the ultimate servant leader. If faith-driven leaders are committed to following Jesus' approach, they are likely to exhibit a similar — though of course, never perfect — humble confidence, moving their organization forward with respect, kindness, and care for all involved.

2

Faith-driven leaders also exhibit strong ethics and morals and operate according to an intrinsic moral code that is informed by their convictions.

While most would agree that ethical leadership should be a fundamental underpinning of any organization, this quality also offers another benefit: it encourages openness toward different modes of thinking.

According to a study from the World Economic Forum, “ethical ideas and moral systems that are part of many religious traditions can be applied in helpful ways to corporate and economic life, triggering new modes of behavior, while proposing alternative perspectives to currently prevailing economic models.”³

Not only does a strong commitment to ethics shift an organization’s internal culture, it can also bring unique points of view to the table that may provide a fresh approach to problem-solving.

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3

Faith-driven leaders also express high emotional intelligence and promote a team-focused culture.

“You might have a high IQ, but if you do not have an emotional intelligence, then you are not going to be successful,” writes Harvard Business School professor and former CEO of Medtronic Bill George.

As Christians, we are called to cultivate many qualities that equate to emotional intelligence in the workplace. Traits like empathy, service, compassion – even courage – demonstrate a faith-based perspective and are invaluable in leadership. Fostering these qualities allows leaders to better connect with others inside the organization, which in turn promotes better collaboration and stronger relationships among their workforce.

A recent study from the Center for Creative Leadership suggests that to be effective, leaders should be attuned to their employees' health, in addition to their own, both emotionally and physically.

By cultivating emotional intelligence, leaders may be able to recognize and address potential concerns or even signs of burnout in their employees.

In addition to contributing to healthier internal relationships, emotional intelligence also helps leaders relate more readily to the people they serve. True servant leadership requires not just vocational skills or the stomach for making important decisions, but a genuine love for others and an ongoing desire to serve them.

4

Faith-driven leaders are also impact-focused. As Millennials and younger generations become more established and able to donate to, or work for, nonprofits, a shift is occurring in the way in which organizations evaluate their efficacy.

Research shows that Millennials want to know how their dollars are being used for sustainable impact — they want to see a quantifiable decrease in hunger rather than a higher number of meals served, for example.

Organizations are responding to this focus-shift by becoming increasingly impact-conscious, a perspective which effective faith-driven leaders already prioritize. The report also states that Millennial employees are concerned with the impact they make over the course of their careers. Christian leaders who endeavor to use their lives — particularly their work — to God's glory already share this larger goal.

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These qualities are invaluable strengths of faith-driven leaders that transcend industry and ministry objectives.

Whether working in Christian settings or secular ones, the strength of character and ethical decision-making that faith-focused leaders demonstrate often translates into more impactful, internally healthy organizations.

ARTICLES REFERENCED

- 1: [The Winning Traits of Faith-Based Leaders](#)
- 2: [Ten Unique Perspectives...](#)
- 3: [Five Ways Faith Makes a Difference](#)
- 4: [Emerging Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations](#)