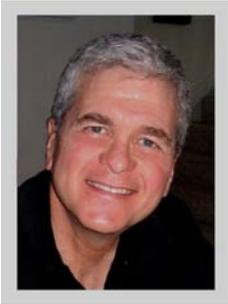


Cultures of Sacrifice Hold Little Appeal at Work



By Leigh Branham

(Adapted from guest column that appeared originally in THE KANSAS CITY STAR.)

Making personal sacrifices for the good of the company is a proud and time-honored tradition. It feels good to know that your long hours and commitment have helped make your employer successful, especially when you share in the rewards.

But when your company begins to expect sacrifice on a daily basis to the point of burnout, unreasonably invades your personal time with excessive demands, and keeps you in a state of constant crisis, you are working in a "culture of sacrifice."

Cultures of sacrifice see their workers as costly units of production instead of human beings. They force their employees to choose between making a living and having a life.

If most of these statements describe your workplace, you work in a culture of sacrifice:

- You are frequently asked to give up evenings, weekend, or vacation time.
- You receive frequent work-related telephone calls during evenings and weekends.
- You miss important family events because of unreasonable work demands.
- Your loved ones have paid a price for your frequent travel and/or relocations.
- You are sick and tired of hearing, "We all need to do more with less."
- The customer is always right, and you are always wrong.
- Your manager's motto is "All work and no play makes you a valued employee."
- Flex time is defined as "work any 18 hours you want."
- A part-time job means a 40-hour workweek.
- When you speak up about any of this, you are considered weak and uncommitted.

There are plenty of cultures of sacrifice around, but they will always more trouble competing for talent. Meanwhile, "reciprocal commitment cultures" will achieve significant financial returns by first asking what they can give to their people.

