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COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGIES EMPLOYED IN THE INTRODUCTION OF
SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

By

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Abstract

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Many organizational leaders and employees have become increasingly interested in implementing some form of spiritual practice or orientation into the fabric of the workplace. A burgeoning field of research and practice has emerged in the past two decades that attempts to address this growing interest. This field is diverse and identified with various titles, the most common being “spirit at work,” “spirituality in the workplace,” “faith at work,” and “faith in the workplace.” Because any cognates of the words “spirit” and “faith” are universally associated with religion, implementing any form of spiritual practice or orientation into a workplace setting comes with multiple challenges, not the least of which being the ways in which the concepts involved are communicated to organizational members. This paper examines such implementation in the context of communication, investigating the communicative strategies employed by practitioners and consultants in this area. Three interviews were conducted with practitioners who introduced spiritual principles to three separate organizations. Interviews were then conducted with the three organizational representatives with whom these practitioners worked. Emphasis was placed on investigating the approaches utilized by practitioners in their attempts to successfully communicate the subject matter, and on the perceptions of the organizational representatives regarding the effectiveness of the communicative strategies that were utilized by practitioners. The concluding section includes implications for practitioners and organizational leaders, as well as recommendations for future study.

Introduction

Much research has been done in the burgeoning field of spirituality in the workplace. Most scholars agree that this trend is not a passing fad, and could even be called a “movement” (Driscoll & Wiebe, 2007, p. 333) that is “here to stay” (Dean & Safranski, 2008, p. 361). Though there is some disagreement regarding what is driving this interest, many authors cite: the modern employees’ desire to find meaning in their work (Moore & Casper, 2006), employees’ perceived need to bring their “whole selves” to work (Dent, Higgins, & Wharff, 2005, p. 640), economic uncertainty, organizational downsizing, the increased amount of time employees spend at work, an attempt by a well-educated and aging population of workers to find meaning in life (Brown, 2003), the growth of a post-industrialist society that struggles for meaning, the diminishing opportunities for developing community at work caused by an increasing use of technology (Haroutiounian, et al., 2000), and many other factors. From an organizational perspective, leaders are becoming convinced that bringing some form of spirituality to the workplace has many benefits, including: increased retention rates (Garcia-Zamor, 2003), job satisfaction (Dent, Higgins, & Wharff, 2005), organizational performance (Benefiel, 2003, p. 383), competitive advantage (Driscoll & Wiebe, 2007), employee creativity, customer service, honesty and trust, and even employee health (Brown, 2003).

In this paper I will not highlight the debate as to whether or not an intersection of spirit and work is appropriate, but will proceed with the acknowledgement that the marriage is already taking place, and will explore the most effective ways to communicate about spirit at work (SW). Crucial to an efficacious introduction of this concept into an organization are the communicative processes in which organizational members engage as this introduction takes place. Questions that will be addressed are:

- How do SW consultants, organizational representatives, and organizational members conceptualize spirituality?
- What are the most effective ways to communicate the concept of spirituality at work?
- What communicative strategies can SW practitioners/consultants and organizational leaders utilize to minimize employee resistance and encourage the acceptance of SW?

This study is an important undertaking for several reasons. First, though many scholarly studies have been done, very few have approached SW from a communication perspective. Considine (2007) recently explored the communication of spirituality in the setting of a Hospice organization, Sass (2000) studied SW from an organizational communication perspective, and Nadeson (1999) sounded a warning that the discourse of corporate spiritualism could become cultish, depending on how it is communicated. Though communication scholars have approached SW from a number of angles, few, if any, have presented a thorough examination of the best communicative factors that go into a successful implementation of SW into an organization. Second, a rapidly increasing number of organizational leaders are implementing SW programs and poor communication of the concept, rather than the relative merits of SW itself, could easily cause problems within organizations. Leaders need to communicate very clearly exactly what is meant when they speak of SW, exactly what is expected of their employees in this regard, and the reasons that SW programs are being implemented in the first place. They also need to be aware of the ways that poor communicative strategies could backfire, potentially creating animosity, alienation and resistance among employees, and even making the organization vulnerable to discrimination litigation. The challenge of exploring such a highly-

charged issue like spirituality within organizations with diverse employee belief systems is a potentially daunting one, and leaders must be given the tools to do so in a way that will increase the probability of positive organizational outcomes.

I will begin with a review of the literature on SW, focusing on ways that spirituality is conceptualized, the potential benefits and pitfalls that accompany the introduction of SW, and the various approaches that have been utilized to address this concept.

Literature Review

Defining Spirit at Work

Though there have been many ways of articulating SW, the most common are “spirituality at work” (Ashar & Lane-Maher, 2004; Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Neck & Milliman, 1994) and “spirituality in the workplace” (Benefiel, 2003; Bradley & Kauanui, 2003; Driscoll & Wiebe, 2007). I will use the term “spirit at work,” however, because it is believed that it provides more clarity than the other terminology. Kinjerski & Skrypnek (2004) cite several reasons that they believe the term SW to be the most appropriate and the least troublesome, including the fact that “Work is used to describe what one does as a career, calling, or job, while workplace refers to the place where an individual does his or her work” (p. 28). The use of the term “spirit at work” also attempts to step around the religious implications of the word “spirituality.” Since the concept of spirit at work is inclusive of both religious and non-religious approaches, and since the word “spirituality” is so often tied to religion, it seems that this terminology is most appropriate for the purpose of clarity.

Regarding the definition of SW, one of the only things that researchers of SW seem to agree on is that it is a difficult concept to define (Schmidt-Wilk & Heaton, 2000). Neil (1997)

states the problem clearly by saying that people “are trying to objectify and categorize an experience and way of being that is at the core very subjective and beyond categorizing” (Neal J. A., 1997, p. 123). Mohamed, Hassan, & Wisnieski (2001) assert that there are more definitions of spirituality than there are authors and researchers to write about it (Mohamed, et al., 2001). King Solomon used the term “chasing after wind” as a way of speaking of a meaningless or impossible endeavor. Since the Hebrew origin of the English word “spirit” is ruach, meaning “wind,” “chasing after wind” may be an apt metaphor when it comes to attempting to definitively capture one universal meaning of spirituality. Despite this, investigation into a working definition of spirituality is crucial, since it will “help investigators develop operational definitions of the term and facilitate the development of improved measures for future empirical testing” (Tuck & Thinganjana, 2007, p. 1).

For the purposes of clarity in what can only be called a quagmire of definitional concepts, I begin by discussing the various definitions of the word spirituality put forth in the literature, then examine the implications of this word when it is used in the context of work (or of the workplace). I will provide a sampling of definitional concepts discovered in the literature, then highlight the various categories of definitions that are generally agreed upon.

Among the various aspects of spirituality that are most articulated is the concept of *transcendence*. Conger (1994) explains this by saying that spirituality “lifts us beyond ourselves and our narrow self-interests . . . it is the most humane of forces. It helps us to see our deeper connection to one another and to the world beyond ourselves” (p. 17). Ashar & Lane-Maher (2004) describes a similar construct he calls “transcendent meaning” as something that refers to “motivations, principles, and work-related interests that transcend beyond the self” (p. 253). This author goes on to say that this transcendence does not necessarily involve belief in a supernatural

being, but can be defined in secular terms as well. Some authors speak of the “experience” of transcendence (Dent, et al., 2005; Fernando & Jackson, 2006; Schmidt-Wilk & Heaton, 2000), while others describe it in more intellectual terms, positing that transcendence can take the form of a belief that there is something bigger than self, be that something God, the universe, mankind, or even the ecosystem (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004).

Another major conceptual component of spirituality that is addressed often in the literature is the existential search for meaning. Vaill (1989) states that spiritual inquiry is particularly appealing because “spiritual quests go beyond rational concrete experiences or phenomena to the abstract, emotional search for meaning – the how and why of existence” (p. 176). Spirituality has long been associated with the human desire to believe that there is a reason for our existence, a purpose to our strivings. This will have obvious implications for SW, since one’s career and/or job is such a major part of most individual’s lives. Many of the authors consulted for this paper listed transcendence as a major component of the definition of spirituality (Biberman, Whitty, & Robbins, 1999; Dent, et al., 2005; Graber, 2001; Sheep, 2006;). Tepper (2003) states that “spirituality is not easy. In fact, a defining feature of the quest for meaning in one’s existence is that it involves overcoming significant obstacles on the road to fulfilling one’s search for meaning. It will be fraught with challenges” (p. 186). Addressing approaches to spiritually oriented leadership training courses, Bento (2000) stated that, though these courses were diverse, “the common denominator is that it reaches to the very core of one’s being, of one’s search for meaning” (p. 656).

Closely related to the concept that spirituality includes a search for meaning is the idea of *connectedness*. King (1997) states that spirituality “is the search for connectedness to others, to non-human creation, and to a transcendent” (p. 668). A significant portion of human spirituality

deals with a personal, inner transformation. An extension of this more internal work is the human need to experience a sense of connection to something outside the self, further expanding the concept of spirituality to include a reaching *in*, involving value and belief formation, and a reaching *out* to establish connection with others. Ashar & Lane Maher (2004) call this desire for and focus on connectedness “the core of the new business paradigm” (p. 251). There has been a shift, according to these authors, from a material age to a relational age “that values connectedness and cooperation” (p. 251). If this shift has, in fact, occurred, organizational leaders must both acknowledge it and appropriately modify the ways in which employee needs are addressed. SW programs that help employees to make the satisfying connections they wish for should, therefore, be valuable tools for these leaders.

Spirituality vs. Religion

Many scholars and most practitioners, when exploring spirituality in the context of work, are quick to point out the differences between spirituality and religion (Barnett, 2000; Brown, 2003; Daniels, Franz, & Wong, 2000; Hicks, 2002). Though many in the workforce would find that a discussion of spirituality must include religion, many do not feel it necessary and many find it inappropriate, especially in a work setting. The distinction is a problematic one to articulate, since religion is subsumed under the category of spirituality, but not vice versa. Mitroff & Denton (1999) found that many employees “viewed religion as a highly inappropriate form of expression and topic in the workplace” (p. 83). They articulate the distinction between spirituality and religion by characterizing spirituality as follows: it is broadly inclusive; it is not formal or structured; it asserts the sacredness of all things, including what might be called the secular or mundane; it is integrally connected to peace and calm. These definitions are inadequate, however, to make any clear distinction between religion and spirituality since many

major religions would embrace all of the above (except, perhaps, the aspect of formality and structure) as an integral part of their religious faith. A more useful and succinct distinction is made by Ashforth & Vaidyanath (2002) when they state that “religion represents a more collective and fixed—or organized—response to desires for transcendence, whereas spirituality represents a more idiosyncratic and emergent response” (p. 360).

It has long been proven, both historically and empirically, that the topic of religion tends to spark controversy, so it is understandable that many proponents of SW attempt to distance themselves from religion in order to encourage the diffusion of the idea that spirituality is not only an acceptable, but a useful, concept to integrate into organizational life. Though some scholars and practitioners have suggested that integrating religious spirituality and work would be an effective way to achieve positive outcomes (Benefiel, 2003; Schneiders, 1988) others assert that the SW movement will be immeasurably more viable if the emphasis is placed on spirituality rather than on a particular religious faith (Brown, 2003; Dean & Safranski, 2008; Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Cavanaugh (1999) states that an appeal to religion in a religiously diverse context is “not energy giving, but divisive” (p. 190). Hicks (2002) counters that Cavanaugh’s approach “contributes to the trivialization of religion” in leadership literature (p. 383). Mitroff & Denton (1999) state that “spiritual matters . . . are best dealt with outside of work, on employees’ own time and in the particular way of their choosing” (p. 5). Milacci & Howell (2000) counter that “spirituality cannot be divorced from its (religious) origins” (p. 1). So far there have been no academic studies comparing the efficacy of one approach over another. Until there are, the debate will continue with no way to find a reasonable conclusion.

Synthesizing Definitions

As has been demonstrated, there are many approaches to defining spirituality, but I turn now to categories of definitions, which may help clarify and synthesize the disparate conceptualizations of it. Brown (2003) articulates one of the most concise, and therefore most useful, ways to categorize the various “types” of spirituality (p. 168). Because of their utility, they will be quoted here in full. Citing Gibbons (1997), Brown suggests a threefold typology of spirituality. The first is “religious spirituality,” (p. 394), which he defines as something that “is accepted as real in the major religions of the world. Its beliefs are theistic and its practices are demonstrated in ritual and ceremony both within the ‘sacred space’, be it church, synagogue, mosque or temple, and also in everyday activities” (p. 394). The second is “secular spirituality,” which he states “includes earth-centred, nature-centred and humanistic spiritualities. Its beliefs may be pantheistic or atheistic and its practices include social and environmental activism” (p. 394). The final category he lists is “mystical spirituality,” defined as something that “can be seen within Christianity, Judaism and Islam, and is present in the Eastern traditions. Its beliefs are theistic and its practices, like those of religious spirituality, can take place in a dedicated sacred space or in everyday circumstances” (p. 394). These three categories are echoed in both SW literature and practice. Given the extensive diversity among organizations and their employees, they provide options for leaders to choose from regarding the most appropriate application of SW in their environment and culture.

Schmidt-Wilk & Heaton (2000) identify what they call “streams of definitions” in the literature (p. 582). Three “streams” emerge, they posit, which they identify as a focus on a) personal inner experience, b) values, ethics, emotions, wisdom, and intuition, and c) the relationship “between personal inner experience and its manifestations in outer behaviors,

principles, and practices” (p. 582). Harlos (2000) notes that most definitions of spirituality “contain one common key element: values” (p. 614). Based on his review of the literature between 1994 and 2004, Sheep (2006) concludes that, although there is no conceptual consensus regarding spirituality, there seems to be a convergence among scholars in many fields. He describes four recurring themes that define common dimensions of spirituality. They are a) self-workplace integration, b) meaning in work, c) transcendence of self, and d) growth and development of one’s inner self at work.

Given the immensely diverse ways in which spirituality is defined in the literature, the task of trying to formulate a working definition is, obviously, problematic. It is not, however, something that should be neglected in the context of a paper on the effective communication of spirituality. The following definition will be utilized here: spirituality is the human desire to find meaning in life, to experience peace and well-being, to experience community with other people, to be part of and to find their place in, something larger than self, be it God, the universe, mankind, the earth, relationships, and so on. It can be distinguished from religion by the fact that there is no established set of teachings or beliefs, no single set of identified rituals or practices, and does not require a belief in the supernatural. The definition of *workplace spirituality* for the purposes of this paper simply echoes the above definition in all respects with the simple addition of “as it applies to one’s work.”

SW and Communication

The introduction of SW into the life of an organization can represent anything from simple experimentation with a new program to a fundamental change in the way that

organization does business. Either way, because SW is a relatively new concept in modern corporate life, leaders need to tread cautiously when introducing it. Since the industrial revolution, Ashforth & Vaidyanath (2002) maintain, “the sacred was typically thought to be something quite apart from the mundane and secular: Religion did not belong in the workplace” (p. 362).

Effective communication is critical to the introduction of any innovation, especially one so fraught with potential pitfalls. Rogers (1983) uses the term “diffusion” when speaking of the introduction of an innovation into an organization, then goes on to say that, “the essence of the diffusion process is the information exchange by which one individual communicates a new idea to one or several others” (p.6). The author suggests that the individual(s) most influential in the adoption process are not usually the organizational leader, consultant, or trainer attempting to implement a change. Instead, they point out, “most people depend mainly upon a subjective evaluation of an innovation that is conveyed to them from other individuals like themselves who have previously adopted the innovation” (p. 18). One practical approach this suggests for the change-agent is to utilize communicative practices that will effectively persuade influential individuals in an organization to become “early adopters” (p. 22), and to work with these individuals to help them to successfully communicate the reasons for their adoption to those who may be ambivalent or resistant to the innovation.

Duerr (2005) explored the introduction of “contemplative practice” in three organizations, asking the question, “What are the ways in which organizations attempt to bring contemplative practices into their everyday work environments?” (p.80). The answer, in summary, was...very carefully. The author states that an employer’s intentions must be clearly communicated if there is to be success in implementing this innovation. “Much of the new

research attributing improved focus, equanimity, ease, and concentration to a long-term meditation practice could be interpreted on the part of employees,” Duerr writes, “as a self-interested attempt by management to increase productivity” (p. 80). It is imperative that employees are certain that the introduction of any new program, spiritual or otherwise, is not simply a ploy to squeeze greater productivity from them with no real concern for the personal benefits that may be gained by the individual employee. For this reason, organizational leaders and the consultants with whom they work, must establish trust between themselves and their employees by forthrightly and clearly articulating their reasons for implementing SW programs and practices, what is expected of each employee as a result of this implementation, and what substantive benefits can be expected by the employee.

Another element that is also essential to a successful implementation of SW is the imperative to overcome client resistance. In Lange’s (1984) description of the “process model” of consultation, the author emphasizes the importance of the effective use of rhetorical techniques when attempting to implement an innovation. The author states that this “model suggests that consulting requires persuasive communication, and that the consultant may be viewed as a rhetor attempting to achieve specific ends through talk” (p. 51). One major task involved in this process, Lange (1984) maintains, is that of identifying “potential and actual reasons” (p. 51) for client resistance. Such resistance must not simply be observed but sought by the change-agent. “If the rhetor/consultant can move clients to verbalize previously unidentified reasons for resistance, he/she can use these reasons as audience premises from which enthymemes may be constructed” (p. 56). Given the diversity of belief systems among the typical organization’s workforce, the introduction of spiritually-based programs into a workplace

setting is a challenging endeavor. As a result of the difficulties involved, it is especially critical that those involved in the introduction utilize effectual communicative strategies to do so.

In this paper, I will explore and analyze the various communicative techniques utilized by consultants and trainers in the SW field. I will also evaluate the responses from the consumers of SW consultants with a view toward understanding the perceived effectiveness of the communicative strategies employed by such consultants and trainers. These responses will then be compared to past research regarding effective communication strategies and suggestions will be made that will enhance the introduction of SW into organizational life.

Benefits and Pitfalls of SW

Many proponents of SW seem to view this innovation as “the panacea for what ails current organizations” (Hamilton & Schriesheim, 2001, p. 375). Brown (2003) states that spirit at work is very often “being put forward as a universal cure to the ills of modern management” (p. 396). Indeed, if all of the potential benefits of SW that are listed in the literature were to be proven valid, SW would seem to be an organizational cure-all. Many authors find reasons to be skeptical of these claims, and warn that the marriage of spirit and work could be a relationship that could prove to be rocky, if not disastrous.

Potential Benefits

Any exploration of the positive benefits attributed to SW must be prefaced by stating some of the problems associated with achieving any measure of certainty regarding the validity of these claims. The primary, and some would say fatal, weakness of studies that have been conducted across a range of disciplines is the definition of the variable “spirituality.” Without conceptual consensus (demonstrated above as essentially non-existent) among scholars studying

SW, it is tenuous at best to make broad claims regarding the appropriateness of introducing the concept of a spiritual workplace. In order for empirically significant research to take place, researchers must deal with and come to reasonable consensus regarding questions such as: What is a spiritual workplace? What constitutes a spiritual approach to leadership? What form does spirituality take in a given setting? How can spirituality – or its organizational outcomes – be measured when researchers are measuring different things? These questions have not been adequately addressed in the literature, nor are they the focus of this paper. It is important to note this limitation, however, as I explore the potential benefits of SW that are claimed by scholars.

Meaning in Work

“Whether we like it or not, work is inextricably intertwined with our perpetual search for meaning. Work is an integral part of our spirituality, our search for ultimate meaning” (Mitroff I., 2003, p. 375). This quote illustrates an attitude that pervades SW literature. The human need to find meaning in life is connected to one’s job. This sentiment is echoed again and again by authors from diverse disciplines, primarily as a way to explain why the SW movement is so popular. Herman, Gioia, & Chalklely (1998) assert that workers want their work to have meaning and their lives to have balance (Herman, Gioia, & Chalklely, 1998). Ashmos & Duchon (2000) see meaning in work as such an integral part of SW that they include it in their definition of it. Workplace spirituality can be defined, they state, as “the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community” (p. 137). They elaborate on this by further breaking this construct down to the fact that an employee; enjoys work, is energized by work, and that work gives the employee a sense of purpose.

Many authors speak of the worker having a sense of “calling,” and this language seems to be used synonymously with meaningful work. Rego, Cunha, & Oliveira (2008) bring the two concepts together when they state that “The notion of a calling refers to the need to feel that one makes a difference through service to others and, in this way, achieves meaning and purpose for life” (p. 171). A worker who experiences this sense of calling, it is maintained, will usually be willing to cope with work conditions (pay, benefits, perquisites) that are less than optimum. This fact leads Elmes & Smith (2001) to warn that management’s attempt to help a worker find a sense of calling could be a form of covert control that prompts workers to work harder, thinking they are doing it for their own benefit, or for that of society (Moved by the spirit: contextualizing workplace empowerment in American spiritual ideals). Ashforth & Vaidyanath (2002) warn that SW can bring about a corporate atmosphere in which work becomes a secular religion with all of the attendant controls that come with any religion. They caution that in such an organizational environment “nonconformists may be demonized and excommunicated, precedents may be recast as commandments and failings as sins, jobs may be sanctified as callings, and incidents may be expanded into sacred legends” (p. 365). Despite the potential for covert control that these warnings reflect, proponents of SW assert that people in general, and workers in particular, thrive when they feel that what they do in the world has meaning and a sense of call (Daniels, Franz, & Wong, 2000; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Neck & Milliman, 1994).

Job Satisfaction/Employee Retention

Closely connected to a sense of meaning (or calling) is the idea that the introduction of spirit at work will produce happier, more satisfied employees, thus increasing employee retention rates. A person who feels that both their organization and their personal contribution to that organization has a purpose that goes beyond mere profit is more likely, some say, to be

committed to that organization. Neck & Milliman (1994) state, without qualification, that “organizations which offer a higher purpose and empowerment can energize their employees and simultaneously meet the firm’s economic objectives as well as a higher community purpose” (p.11). These authors go on to assert that this, in turn, has the potential to lead to greater organizational commitment among employees. As cited by Benefial (2003), Trott (1996) found that there is a strong correlation between individual spiritual health and “organizational openness, self-efficacy, and organizational commitment” (p. 368). Previous research has shown that individuals with a high degree of commitment miss less work and are less likely to leave an organization (Trott, 1996; Walker, Jones, Wuensch, Aziz, & Cope, 2008, p. 136). Walker et al. (2008), in their study of the sanctification of work (a form of SW), found that “sanctification of work is positively related to positive outcomes in the areas of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intent to leave a job” (p. 144). A large percentage of those who have done research in this area agree with Walker that the introduction/enhancement of a spiritual workplace will be of tremendous benefit to both employers and employees by creating a sense of both job satisfaction and job security (Fry & Slocum, 2008; Konz & Ryan, 1999; Sheep, 2006; Singhal & Chatterjee, 2006).

Organizational Performance/Success

It goes without saying that organizations must be productive to survive. It’s all well and good to aspire to make the world a better place, and to provide employees with benefits (tangible and otherwise) that will enhance their sense of well-being, but unless that well-meaning organization is able to be financially solvent, it is not possible for those aspirations to be fulfilled. Some question what they consider a strange admixture of profit and philanthropic motives. Benefial (2003) eloquently summarizes these concerns when she asks “If spirituality is

ultimately about non-materialistic concerns, is it appropriate to focus on the material gains to be reaped by integrating spirituality into organizational life?" (p. 371). Benefial also questions the results of the SW research that shows a positive relationship between SW and performance on the basis that quantifiable results are difficult to obtain with regard to a subject so multi-faceted, not to mention inadequately defined. Nevertheless, many researchers agree with Neck & Milliman (1994) when they state that there is such a positive relationship. These authors identify four specific ways that SW enhances organizational performance: a) it enhances their intuitive abilities, b) it encourages employees to have a more compelling organizational vision, thus increasing employee innovation, c) the personal growth experienced by employees in spiritually oriented companies increases energy and enthusiasm, and d) SW can enhance teamwork and employee commitment to the organization (p. 10). All of these factors, Neck & Milliman (1994) maintain, produce more fulfilled, satisfied, and committed employees, and that such a condition will inevitably lead to increased organizational performance. Milliman, Ferguson, Trickett, & Condemni (1999) examined the implementation of SW at Southwest Airlines in the early 1990s. This research focused on the relationship between a spiritual corporate atmosphere and positive organizational outcomes. The authors concluded that "companies that engage not just the minds, but also the hearts and emotions of their employees, will be more profitable" (p. 230).

The SW movement is primarily focused on improving the quality of life among organizational employees (Sheep, 2006). Leaders who are cognizant of and sensitive to the goal of improving employees' lives also have the responsibility of maintaining a profitable organization. Although it would certainly be a quality-of-life improvement to adopt an improved health-care plan, for instance, management must also consider how such an improvement would impact the financial stability of the organization. When considering the positive benefits of SW

programs, it must be acknowledged that increased organizational performance and profitability are factors under consideration among organizational leaders (Dent, et al., 2005).

Potential Pitfalls of SW

Legal

The freedom of religious expression is a right that is firmly ingrained in the American mindset and one that is protected in the workplace under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (Dean, 2008). Under the provision, workers are protected from being discriminated against on the basis of race, creed, color, gender or religion. In the context of our consideration, Dean (2008) explains that this means that “Employers may not discriminate against employees based on their religious beliefs or practices, may not either prescribe or proscribe religious participation as a condition of employment, and must reasonably accommodate an employee’s religious practices in the workplace” (p. 362). Additionally, under the act, employers are sanctioned against actions that engender a “hostile” work environment. Application of this law in subsequent decisions developed this concept and worded it as an “intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment” (29 CFR § 1164.11 [a] 1991; cf. *R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul, Minn.* 112 S.Ct. 2538, U.S. Minn 1992). As a result of these legal developments with regard to religion in the workplace, along with a marked rise in religious discrimination complaints lodged with the Equal Employment Opportunity Committee in the past ten years, employers are often leery of addressing the issue of spirituality. Zamor (2003) agrees, noting that mixing business and religion is risky business. “Forcing an employee to join a prayer session or Bible study is clearly illegal,” he writes. “But even when employers make it optional, they could be exposing themselves to liability. It could be perceived as a form of favoritism that could easily lead to

discrimination” (p. 358). It is particularly appropriate in this context to note that employers literally feel damned if they do and damned if they don’t. How employers have dealt with this dilemma is beyond the purview of this paper. Suffice to say that the initiation of SW programs is sometimes avoided simply because some employers believe that to do so has the potential to make them vulnerable to being sued.

Employee Resistance

It has been noted that many people in today’s workforce are not only open to, but seeking, opportunities for spiritual growth or expression at work. Many others, however, are not. There are many people who firmly believe that spirituality and religion are private issues and should remain so. In an ironic twist, the employees of many of the organizations that are the most blatantly spiritual resisted organizational offers of support with regard to their spiritual path. In an extensive survey of both religious and secular organizations, Dean (2008) found that 38% of those in a “spiritual” organization indicated that they did not want organizational assistance in creating SW opportunities (p. 365). Interestingly, only about a third of those in so-called secular organizations resisted the incorporation of SW programs and culture creation. It seems that many employees who consider themselves religious and/or spiritual would rather that their employer stay out of what they consider to be a personal issue. This was supported qualitatively through interviews with employees conducted by Dean (2003). One respondent said, “Finding the relationship between the ultimate and my work experience is part of my pilgrimage and relationship with God—not the place for the [organization] to intentionally meddle” (p. 365). Furthermore, Nancy Austin cogently (and humorously) sums up what many feel about SW. She writes, “Call it what you will - spirituality, yin and yang, dharmic management, following your bliss - the unspoken, untested assumption is that merging your

whole being with your work in order to serve a Higher Purpose is a worthy, even essential business practice in turbulent times. That idea goes way beyond the merely unorthodox. It is just plain nuts.” She goes on to add, “I don’t want any corporation messing with my soul. I will gladly contribute my best talents, efforts, and productivity. I will work my rear-end off. Just keep your mitts off my spirit” (Austin, 1995).

Because the terms “spirit” and “spirituality” so often invoke the idea of religion, and because religion is considered by many to be something that is part of the private sphere (and should remain so), employee resistance to SW programs has been shown to be relatively robust (Dean & Safranski, 2008). Organizational leaders and the practitioners with whom they work must be aware of and appropriately prepare for this potential.

Introducing Spirit at Work

The focus of this project is to explore the most effective communication strategies that can be used to introduce spirituality into the workplace. Of course, much work has been done in the field of communication regarding the successful implementation of new programs into organizational life, and I draw from these studies to support the conclusions drawn here. SW is an issue, however, that is fraught with its own particular problems, many of which have been outlined above. This study will be useful in helping SW practitioners and organizations alike to respond to spiritual needs of its employees without creating new problems as they attempt to do so. It will help us understand the types of resistance that can be expected, and provide practical solutions to successfully overcoming this resistance. It will also deal with the reality of spiritual and religious diversity in the workplace, finding and suggesting ways to be respectful of such diversity.

Specifically, the research questions that will be addressed are as follows:

1. How do SW consultants, organizational representatives, and organizational members conceptualize spirituality?
2. What are the most effective ways to communicate the concept of spirituality at work?
3. What communicative strategies can organizational leaders utilize to minimize employee resistance and encourage the acceptance of SW?

Method

Establishing the most effective communicative strategies for the introduction of spirit at work programs involves investigating the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of those interviewed. This is best done through in-depth interviewing. Grounded theory was utilized in the gathering and analyzing of data because it offers a means of exploring issues when data are not easily quantifiable (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I chose grounded theory as the best method to explore practitioners' and organizational representatives' perceptions of the best ways to communicate spirituality because of its suitability for revealing process. The aim of grounded theory is to discover the theories implicit in the data rather than testing an hypothesis (Duerr, 2004). Continuous comparative analysis was utilized in the examination of data, avoiding what Glaser & Strauss (1967) call "the simple ordering of a mass of data under a logically worked-out set of categories" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 92).

Interviewee Data

Five SW "practitioners" and three organizational representatives were interviewed for this project. The practitioners included four women and one man. Three of the practitioners were employed full-time as SW consultants, and two were employed by academic institutions as

faculty. The organizational representatives (OR) interviewed consisted of two men and one woman. Each of these individuals had worked with and/or participated in the training one of the above practitioners interviewed. Only one of the ORs personally contacted the practitioner and made arrangements for the training. All three of the ORs were employed full-time with the organization through which the training was conducted. Please see Appendix D for a complete list of the interviewees, along with information regarding their companies and organizations.

This study was conducted through interviews conducted over the phone. The above five SW practitioners were contacted and asked questions regarding their experiences with the introduction and/or the enhancement of SW programs in organizations. Interviewees were located via an internet search of various SW trade organizations. A snowball sampling method was used to find additional practitioners. These practitioners (consultants and trainers) were contacted initially via email, asking for their participation. This email was followed up with a phone call to encourage participation and to answer any questions they had. Once they agreed to participate, subjects were sent (via email) an informed consent form (See Appendix C) and asked to electronically sign it and return it via email.

In addition, five representatives of organizations which have SW programs in place were contacted and asked to participate in the study. In some cases, the organizations contacted had worked directly with the practitioners who were interviewed for this research. Other organizations were found via an internet search for organizations which have ongoing SW programs. Individuals who have had direct participation in the implementation and/or enhancement of SW programs in their organization were interviewed via phone and asked appropriate questions (See Appendix B). Upon obtaining their consent to participate, these individuals were emailed an informed consent form (See Appendix C) and asked to

electronically sign and return it. Each interview was conducted by phone and lasted an average of 30 minutes.

Interview Information

Interview questions were formulated to elicit data relevant to the research questions listed above. Similar questions were asked of both practitioners and of organizational representatives with a view toward eliciting information from each point of view regarding the salient issues. Interviews were conducted in a general, interview guide approach in which data from the same general areas of information were collected from each interviewee. This interviewing approach allowed a degree of freedom and adaptability in the elicitation of information from participants. The issues addressed in the questions centered around the research questions listed above. Additional questions were occasionally asked when clarification or further information regarding a specific theme was desired. The primary difference in the questions asked practitioners versus organizational representatives was with regard to the nature of their perspective regarding the training and not in the actual material covered. Both practitioners and organizational representatives were asked about the nature and extent of their experience with the implementation of SW programs. Practitioners were asked about the reasons articulated by organizational representatives for the introduction of such programs. Similarly, organizational representatives were asked what factors prompted a desire for such a training and a search for a practitioner to present it. Both were asked the ways in which they would define spirituality, about the expectation of resistance from trainees, and about resistance actually encountered. Practitioners were then asked how such resistance was expressed and how they attempted to deal with it. Organizational representatives were asked to evaluate how effective the practitioner had

been when dealing with resistance from employees. An interview guide can be found in Appendix E.

Since organizational representatives have the responsibility of explaining the rationale for the implementation of SW training to those who will participate, they were asked what communicative methods they used to explain the need for and the benefits of such training. They were asked if there was resistance encountered prior to the training and, if so, how such resistance was addressed. Practitioners were asked what assessment methods, if any, were utilized to evaluate the success of the training program and what criteria were used for such assessment. Organizational representatives were asked for their judgment regarding the effectiveness of the practitioner's program. Both practitioners and organizational representatives were queried regarding whether or not there were current programs in place as a result of the SW training that was conducted.

Data Collection and Analysis

The primary method of data collection was telephone interviews. Each interview was recorded and then transcribed in order to facilitate accurate coding. The transcripts were read several times to identify themes and categories. A general inductive approach was utilized to code various themes brought out by research participants. Based on the description by Lindlof & Taylor (2002), the analyst is always "comparing each incident to other incidents in order to decide in which categories they belong." (p. 219). Open coding, a technique used to express data in conceptual form, was initially used as each interview transcription was reviewed. The objective of this was to form a preliminary framework of analysis by creating descriptive categories. Initial codes were also formulated using *in vivo* coding, which is a method that

utilizes the actual words used by the interviewees to form the codes themselves. Forty five categories initially emerged. Many of these categories overlapped and were combined and were later reduced, with some of the categories being combined with similar related categories. This step, in which concepts that pertain to the same phenomena are grouped together, is referred to as “categorizing” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 305). Through the analysis it became clear that many of the initial codes related to one another under categories that represented broader areas of conceptualization. “Assessment,” “follow-up,” “observation,” and “measurement,” for instance, were combined as “assessment,” since it became difficult to neatly place some text units into one of the four categories. Since “follow-up,” “measurement,” and “observation” are a part of the assessment process, it was decided that the amalgamated category would be more appropriate as the data were analyzed.

Using analytic induction, a method that helps reduce broad categories into subcategories, codes were then further integrated into the final five categories that best addressed in the research questions (See table 1). Strategies, methodology, terminology, and other references in the data that related to communicative strategies were grouped under “Comm.” Direct or indirect references to forms of spirituality (i.e. religion, spirit at work, personal beliefs, etc.) were classified as “Spir.” The various workplace issues that had the potential to hinder or facilitate the introduction of SW were categorized as “Issues.” Potential or real advantages or disadvantages of a SW program in the workplace were listed under “Ben.” Finally, the “assessment” category (explained above) dealt with issues brought up by interviewees that dealt with the ways in which the evaluation of the particular programs introduced by practitioner were conducted.

These final categories directly addressed the research questions at hand, but also raised an additional theme that was not anticipated by the questions. The “issues” category was brought up

by many interviewees and indicated an acknowledgement of relevant factors that existed within various organizations before, during and after the introduction of SW. The various issues articulated by both practitioners and organizational representatives included foundational factors that were present in the organization and that could, depending on the organization, be seen as having a positive or negative impact on training (organizational “culture,” “mission,” “diversity,” “leadership type,” and “morale”). These factors were carefully considered in the analysis of data because, though they were not anticipated by the research questions, they were often referred to by interviewees and because they have a significant impact on the way(s) that SW programs should be introduced.

Table 1

Explanation of Coding Categories

<u>Original Code</u>	<u>Grouped Codes</u>	<u>Final Coding Categories</u>
Alt – Alternative terminology	<u>Comm</u>	
Assess – Assessment Needs/Results	Intro	
Bel – Beliefs/Values	Entry	
Ben – Benefits of spirituality	Under	
ComSpir – Communicating spirituality	Meth	<u>Comm</u> – Strategies and issues regarding the communication of spirituality
Comm- Sense of community	Terms	
Cult – Organizational culture	Alt	
Def – Definitions of spirituality/Religion	SpirLang	
Div – Issues of diversity	Def	
Entry – Organizational entry	Under	
Eng – Engagement in work		
Evid – Evidence of spirituality	<u>Spir</u>	
Exp – Expressions of Spirituality	RelVSpir	
Fol – Follow-up	IndSpir	
Form – Forms spiritual programs/trainings take	Pers	<u>Spir</u> - References to spirituality
Fost – Fostering spirit at work	OrgSpir	
IndSpir – Individual spirituality	Trans	
Intro – Introducing spirituality	SW	
Lead – Roles of leadership	Exp	
Mean – Meaning in work	Evid	
Meas – Measurement	Bel	
Med – Meditation	Mind	
Meth – Method(s) used to introduce spirituality	Med	

Mind – Mindfulness		
Miss – Organizational mission, values	<u>Issues</u>	
Mor - Morale	Miss	
NW – Nature of work	Cult	
Obser - Observations of positive or negative employee traits	Div	<u>Issues</u> – Workplace issues affecting the introduction of SW
OrgSpir – Organizational spirituality	Stress	
Pers – Personal spirituality	NW	
Rel – Reference to a particular religion or to religion in general	Form	
RelVSpir – Religion vs. spirit	Lead	
Res – Resistance	Mor	
ResD – How resistance was addressed	Type	
SpirLang – Language used to describe spirituality	<u>Ben/Pit</u>	
Stress – The role of stress in the workplace	Eng	
SW – Spirituality in the workplace	Trust	
Terms – terminology for spirituality	Eng	<u>Ben</u> – Benefits and pitfalls of SW
Trans – Transformative experiences	Trans	
Trust – trust in relationships	Mean	
Type – Types of organizations	Whole	
Under – Underground or “below the radar” aspect of spirituality	Comm	
Well – Employee wellness	Well	
Whole – Bringing the “whole self” to work	<u>Assess</u>	<u>Assess</u> – Assessment of SW training
	Fol	
	Meas	
	Obser	

Discussion

Organizational Culture

The theoretical framework that is most salient to the findings of this research centers around organizational culture. From a communication perspective, the concept of organizational culture relates strongly to the co-constructed meanings mutually created through the way(s) in which members interact, and the particular way of life these meanings produce within a given group. The data gathered in this project indicates that meaningful work is a need expressed by many organizational members. It is also an integral part of SW training. One interviewee, when speaking to organizational representatives about the primary purpose of SW training, explains that it is about “meaning and fulfillment at work.” An individual who finds the work of their organization and their personal contribution to this work as meaningful is one who will also have a stronger sense of organizational identity, which is also an important aspect of the idea of organizational culture. To the extent that SW training is successful in helping individual employees find “meaning and fulfillment” in their work, it will also be effective in increasing the degree to which that individual personally identifies with his or her organization.

Spirituality at work has been considered with both an individual and an organization lens. From an individual perspective, spirituality at work is associated within an employee’s inner self, the meaning he or she finds in work, connectedness with others, and an individual’s ability to experience a sense of transcendence (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004). An organizational-culture approach views spirituality within the context of an organizational culture that is shaped around mission statements, values-driven leadership that promote business practices that are socially responsible, and an attempt to develop a work environment that

encourages personal spiritual growth (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2008; Mitroff & Denton, 1999). The two ways of viewing spirituality in the workplace overlap and mutually support one another, the culture providing an appropriate environment in which personal spiritual attainment and development can take place on a personal level. Since this study explored organizations which had already made the decision to invite practitioners to come and do SW training, it is clear that leadership, at some level, was interested in promoting the personal spiritual improvement of the employees involved. Beyond that, however, it is not possible for the information gathered for this study to shed light on the culture that existed within a particular organization.

Another approach to organizational culture that applies specifically to SW is that of “comparative management,” which stresses the significance of nationality over the sway of any organization to affect behavior (Hofstede, 1991). If it is true, as Hofstede and others assert, that nationality has significant power over organizational cultural formation, it would also follow that an individual’s spiritual beliefs, values, practices, and prejudices, which are brought into rather than formed by organizational culture, have the potential to even more powerfully influence both an individual’s behavior and the culture created by the collective behavior of many such individuals. The data collected here suggests that, although spirituality is often addressed in the context of organizational life, it is already a significant part of the lives of the trainees, and therefore a powerful determinant of organizational behavior and culture. The most an SW practitioner can hope to accomplish is to help employees to integrate their personal spirituality and their work life – not an insignificant task.

Geertz (1973) once noted that “anthropologists don’t study villages, they study *in* villages” (p. 215). It is important to recognize, as Eisenberg & Riley (2000) point out, that when

embarking on any examination of organizational members, the reasons for their behavior within an organization may not be “best found in or even near the organization” (p. 316). This insight is especially applicable when considering the concept of spirituality within the framework of an organization. Many of the work-related behaviors enacted by employees, including many communicative patterns and conventions, are learned and/or reinforced in a work setting. Spirituality, similar to nationality, is an exception to this. The data collected here suggests that when SW practitioners “introduced” a spiritual perspective into the workplace, they were *always* building on the spiritual beliefs already possessed by those being trained. The practice of soliciting the names of and the criteria for spiritual leaders, employed by one of the practitioners interviewed here suggests a sensitivity to this reality, and appears to be an effective way to acknowledge the fact that, when SW training is introduced to organizational members, spiritual values are not being introduced as much as they are being built upon.

Definitions of Spirit at Work

One of the major patterns that emerged from the observations made in this project was that, although both practitioners and organizational consultants approached the training with their own conceptions regarding the meaning of spirituality, they were careful not to impose these definitions on the trainees. Given the problematic nature of creating a universally accepted definition of SW, two of the practitioners I spoke to approached the issue of communicating the conceptual nature of spirituality inductively. When working with a client, instead of providing a working definition of spirituality or of SW in particular, they asked the clients a series of questions that sought to draw a definition from the organizational members themselves. One of the practitioners interviewed asks participants, in the initial stage of training, to brainstorm and come up with a list of spiritual leaders that they admire. A follow-up question is then, “What

character traits do these individuals share?” After this list is generated, these traits are captured on a white board and referred to throughout the training as the conceptual basis for SW. This approach avoids the resistance that is potentially encountered when a definition comes pre-packaged and is provided by the practitioner and, according to the two practitioners who utilize this method, it is very effective at anticipating and defusing any resistance that may be encountered. One of the interviewees stated that this approach avoids the resistance that may come as a result of “me trying to sell them on my definition.” Another interviewee that had attended one of the sessions referred to above confirmed that this approach was effective, not only for avoiding resistance, but for laying the groundwork for highlighting the need for SW. This approach was researched by Kinjerski & Strypnek (2004) using an interview method that asked, “What is spirit at work and what elements are present when a person experiences spirit at work?” (p. 30). The authors then compiled a list of themes that included physical, affective, cognitive, interpersonal, spiritual, and mystical.

The definitions for spirituality articulated by interviewees for this research were closely aligned with the definitions expressed in the literature reviewed. The major themes of transcendence, search for meaning, and connectedness that were brought forth among researchers were spoken of frequently by practitioners and organizational representatives alike. The typologies of definitions referred to by Brown (2003) of religious, secular, and mystic spirituality were all represented among the interviewees in one form or another. The definitional streams articulated by Schmidt-Wilk & Heaton (2000) of personal, inner experience, values, ethics and emotions, and the relationship between an individual’s inner experience and his or her outer behaviors and practices were also expressed by the participants in this study. One example of this synthesis of definitions was expressed by one interviewee who defined spirituality as “the

ability to behave with wisdom and compassion while maintaining inner and outer peace, regardless of the circumstances.” An analysis of the data gathered in this study helps to confirm that the conceptual frameworks and typologies expressed by researchers accurately capture those utilized in the “real world” of organizational spirituality. The limited number of interviewees called on by this research project, unfortunately, does not allow one to draw definite conclusions regarding the parallels between the definitions brought out by the literature and the definitions utilized by organizational representatives and SW practitioners as a whole.

Terminology

When attempting to introduce the concept of SW to organizational members, effective communication of the concept necessitates that the practitioner utilize terminology that increases clarity and reduces the possibility of resistance generated by the use of hot-button words. Terminology that directly references religion is potentially divisive and can bring about resistance unnecessarily. Though not offensive in and of themselves, the use of religious words such as prayer, God, Holy Spirit, salvation, church, supernatural, divinity and the like can spark such resistance. Kinjerski & Skrypnek (2004) suggest the use of other terms that can be used in the context of SW training that have little or no religious connotations. These terms include meaning, purpose, stewardship, heart and soul, vitality, character, virtue, integrity, trust, cooperation, respect, freedom, authenticity, truth, intention, intuition, and energy (p. 38). Finding terminology that provides appropriate clarity and decreases misunderstanding is problematic, especially with regard to a topic as emotionally charged as spirituality. One author reviewed for this paper pointed out that many attempt to avoid words with a religious connotation, but that this approach has limitations of its own, since “many of the alternative words carry varying interpretations resulting in misconception and the need for further defining” (Kinjerski &

Skrypnek, 2004, p. 38). This problem was reflected in the data gathered here. All of the interviewees expressed concern that the terminology utilized by practitioners doing SW training, whether or not such terminology carried religious connotations, be adequately defined in the context of the workplace.

An analysis of the data gathered for this project indicates that the practitioners interviewed, wishing to avoid resistance, carefully chose the words they use. They also paid close attention to the clarity and precision with which they defined the terminology they used. Even words that have fewer religious connotations (words such as love, compassion, and kindness) need to be clearly defined in the context of the training itself. Kinjerski & Skrypnek (2004) suggest that many of the words that are used with regard to SW have “a new-age ring to them” (p. 38). Mitroff & Denton (1999) agree, quoting one of their research participants as characterizing new-age language as “gushy and sloppy” (p. 88). This problem was reflected in many of the interviews conducted for this project. One practitioner interviewed gave an example of a time when a potential client (a public school system) had asked her if she would begin her sessions with a prayer. “I was struck by this, since I had said nothing about prayer, about religion. I didn’t even use the word spirituality, you know? But that’s where this individual was, and he was very nervous, and even though I said nothing, I’m not sure he heard it.”

Many interviewees, especially those involved in actually introducing SW principles to organizations, pointed out that they often intentionally avoided traditional religious or spiritual language. Others, however, felt that being too circumspect with their language choices could be seen as disingenuous and demonstrating a lack of integrity on the part of the trainer. One participant expressed that, for a time, she “flew under the radar,” but came to the conclusion that her strong religious faith should be declared openly so that people would know where she was

“coming from.” Though there was no consensus regarding which terminology was best, most participants agreed that SW practitioners need to carefully and intentionally choose the terminology that will be used to introduce the concepts involved.

One very important aspect that was brought out in the interviews was that the terminology utilized by practitioners was consistent with an emphasis on diversity and inclusion. This information was especially significant for this study because the presence of substantial diversity among organizational members with regard to spirituality underlies the research questions under consideration. It is the very reality of this diversity that creates the potential for resistance among SW trainees in an organizational setting. Participating practitioners demonstrated that they were extremely conscious of this spiritual diversity and that they made an intentional effort to address this through the ways that they communicated the concept of spirituality. One interviewee from a hospital setting reported that, in their training, “the terminology was very much diversity and inclusion, using words referencing spirituality as spiritual diversity.” The consultant who conducted this training affirmed that this was an intentional choice. She stated that, as she developed her presentation, she was “very sensitive to diversity. I knew I had a lot of thresholds to meet, so when I started working on this I thought, I’ve got to make this language compatible with psychology, philosophy, major world religions, etc.” The ability to be sensitive to divergent viewpoints, especially with regard to the personal issues that surround the issue of spirituality, was shown to be consistent with successfully overcoming potential resistance and with the effectiveness of SW training. This concept agrees with the literature reviewed for this paper.

Spirituality vs. Religion

Although there is much written about the importance of researchers and practitioners in the field of SW making a clear distinction between spirituality and religion, none of those interviewed felt the need to completely distance themselves from religion. A clear distinction between the avoidance of religious language and terminology and the avoidance of the topic of religion itself must here be pointed out. Practitioners interviewed made an effort to be sensitive to the religious diversity represented in their trainees by using terminology that addressed the values that underlie many religions (love, compassion, trust, etc.) but they did not identify their training as spiritual-but-not-religious. This approach was not consistent with the conclusions drawn in the majority of the literature examined for this project. Most of the authors reviewed agreed with Mitroff & Denton (1999) that addressing religion in the context of organizational spirituality training creates more problems than it solves. The relatively small sample of practitioners utilized in this research does not allow the contradiction of these conclusions, but it is notable that none of the interviewees felt the need to articulate a clear separation between religion and spirituality. It must be considered that this result could have resulted from the particular religious/spiritual orientation and beliefs of the practitioners chosen for these interviews and that different results may have resulted if data had been gathered from a different or larger group.

“At first I was so clear on saying, you know, I’m talking about spirituality, not religion,” one participant stated, “...and I had one woman say to me, she got really annoyed and said, ‘Mary, for me they’re not separate.’ And I had to listen...there some who say, you know, ‘I’m spiritual, but not religious,’ but others say, ‘I’m spiritual *and* religious.’” After this exchange Mary did, in fact, give this much thought, but eventually decided that religion would not be

“promoted” in her workshops. Despite her personal religious beliefs, she admitted to calling it “creating a spiritual value base,” rather than religion, per se. One participant who works at a chemical dependency treatment facility (to whom Mary introduced SW) stated that the individuals to whom SW was introduced were encouraged to follow their own inclinations regarding any distinction that might be made between religion and spirituality. “Some people use God language, others don’t, but nobody takes offense. It’s all part of the whole thing.”

Communicative Openness About Spirituality - Practitioners

All of the practitioners interviewed for this paper considered themselves “spiritual,” but many of them chose not to disclose or emphasize this. As the data were analyzed, one of the early codes used was “under the radar,” indicating the fairly consistent comments made regarding this choice. The overall sense was that those interviewed believe that there exists a prejudice in the academic and in the business community against an approach to organizational improvement that includes a spiritual thrust. One interviewee expressed that this choice to “keep it in the closet” was limited to his early career because, at that time, a spiritual approach to his patients’ care (this interviewee was then a behavioral therapist) was considered strange and without evidence to support its use. He expressed that the surge of interest in mindfulness-based cognitive therapy has helped a spiritual approach to therapy become not only accepted but to be seen as “cutting edge.” Another interviewee who introduced her mindfulness-based relapse prevention program to a treatment center in a west coast city expressed the need to communicate in a way that avoided specifically religious language because of the background of many of the patients. She says that “a lot of people have spent significant time in Alcoholics Anonymous and often have a Christian or similar orientation, so it can be confusing to go in there and introduce what they perceive as a new religion.” This practitioner also mentioned that a portion of their

program is federally funded and that spiritual language was avoided for that reason. The implication was clearly that spiritual-sounding language on a federal grant application would lead to a denial of funds. “We use words like meta-cognition,” she reports, “or we may simply frame (our work) in more psychological terms.”

Another of the practitioners interviewed, however, takes a more direct approach with regard to the use of spiritual terminology. This practitioner stated that she kept her spirituality “under wraps” for a portion of her academic career, but then started to be more “open” with her spirituality, stating that she didn’t want “any more secrets.” She also, however, claimed that the term “spiritual” was considered by many to be “flaky and fluffy and always combined with New Age.” Since the word is considered “New Age,” she stated, it is “considered derogatory.” This practitioner now uses the word spirituality boldly in her work, attempting to help people delineate its meaning from the more derogatory one that, she states, is often attached to it. She has written a book (in publication) that is, as she puts it, a “how-to guide for implementing spirituality in the workplace.” This practitioner’s approach clearly appeals to clients for whom spirituality is seen to be an important dimension of their organizational environment. When asked about the use of “mindfulness-based” practices in organizational settings, this practitioner referred to them as a “Trojan horse, or ethical trickery” that many use to introduce spirituality into their programs without using the word itself. “If people start meditating,” she states, “a lot of people will start to have more spiritual or religious experiences.”

The interviewee with the most experience with the introduction of spirituality into the workplace stated that, although her intent was to introduce a spiritual element to the organizations she works with, she begins with language that evokes a more “scientific” concept. She stated that her sensitivity to diversity issues causes her to introduce a concept she calls

“emotional intelligence” before she introduces the concept of “spiritual intelligence.” “I decided that the safest place to begin a conversation (about spiritual issues),” she states, “was from the domain of psychology.” This interviewee uses this terminology as a way of anticipating the potential resistance she believes would probably manifest if she began her presentation with a discussion of spirituality in the workplace.

Communicative Openness About Spirituality - Organizational Representatives

Practitioners spoke frequently about the need to carefully frame their terminology with a view toward anticipating resistance on the part of the organizational members with whom they worked. Organizational representatives, however, spent less time speaking about resistance to “spiritual” terminology and seemed less concerned about this as an issue. One practitioner worked with an organizational representative from a large hospital (see Appendix D) in a southern state. This hospital is a Methodist hospital and, according to its OR, organizational leaders had a desire to rediscover the Christian roots of their value system. Although the practitioner, as described, was cautious in her approach of the issue of spirituality, and perhaps *because she was cautious*, the hospital’s OR did not sense any resistance on behalf of trainees to the topic of spirituality when it was approached. She did, however, note that they got “a little bit of pushback from people who did not feel that this concept embraced their belief system, or lack thereof.” On the whole, organizational representatives reported very little resistance to a spiritual approach, or to spiritual terminology. From a comparative analysis of this data, it seems clear that the efforts of the practitioners to use language that introduced the concept of spirituality in a way that avoided resistance were successful.

Organizational Performance/Success

One of the major controversies in literature that addresses spirituality in the workplace is how the issue of organizational performance and/or success should be approached. Spirituality is generally conceptualized as something that addresses non-materialistic concerns, but it is often employed in the service of materialistic ones (Benefial, 2003). Most authors reviewed agreed, however, that adequately addressing the spiritual concerns of employees will lead to greater productivity and financial solvency (Milliman, et.al, 1999). The practitioners interviewed for this research articulated that they were not only aware of the potential clash between materialistic and non-materialistic concerns, but that they attempted to show both organizational leaders and trainees that attention paid to spiritual concerns would serendipitously be of value to their particular organization in ways that would increase organizational performance. There was no clear indication from the data gathered here, however, that there were mechanisms utilized by either practitioners or organizational representatives that would demonstrate a direct relationship between the SW training presented and the types of organizational outcomes desired.

For many of the interviewees, the data upon which assessment criteria depended were anecdotal. One practitioner also does academic research, so she outlined a careful method of analysis that included a pre- and post-test, an assessment of the various organizational factors that were measured, as well as measurement instruments utilized to analyze and interpret the data. Despite this, what seemed to be most compelling to this individual was also anecdotal. “This was unreal, what happened to this group,” she stated. “It was incredible. I had people come in on their days off...I had people who would trade shifts so they could come in (to the booster sessions). It was unreal.” Obviously, what happens when a person is spiritually enriched in some way defies empirical quantification. Because of this, the more subjective observations of

practitioners and participants are a reasonable way to assess the changes that take place in individuals as a result of training. The changes that were described by interviewees were often tangible benefits experienced by training participants, such as promotions, increased hours spent at work, and decreased sick days taken. The outcomes spoken about most frequently, however, were anecdotal in nature and emphasized changes in employee attitudes, morale, passion, energy, and enthusiasm. These less quantifiably measurable effects cannot be separated from more measurable ones despite the fact that they are more easily described in qualitative terms. One participant's observations reflected both qualitative and quantitative measures. She stated that, as a result of a seminar she conducted "people had transformative experiences. Some quit their jobs and started businesses, others got promoted."

Many such stories were recounted in the course of these interviews. One is left to wonder, however, if such anecdotal evidence will be taken seriously by more outcome-oriented individuals, whether they be researchers or organizational leaders. Milliman, et al. (1999), for example, call for less anecdotal evidence to be utilized in SW research and more emphasis on what they call "a more comprehensive analysis of spirituality in organizations" (p. 222). While questioning the measurement of spirituality in quantifiable units, Benefial (2003) points out that, in order to be taken seriously by the larger scholarly community, the study of spirituality must include quantitative research (p. 389). This research approach, she asserts, will allow SW scholars to be in mainstream management scholars.

Stories are compelling and for millennia have formed the basis of deeply held values and beliefs regarding spiritually oriented topics. One conclusion I draw from the above is that both researchers and practitioners need to balance a reliance on quantifiable outcomes with qualitative data (interpretations, stories, anecdotes). This may be an especially important balance to strike in

a field such as SW. An over-reliance on quantitative data may serve to kill the spirit SW, so to speak. Mitroff & Denton (1999) assert that business students are taught that the soul and spirit are “soft” and “fuzzy” conceptualizations that have no place in business schools or in the workplace (p. 17). The debate between the quantitative versus the qualitative approach forms the basis of the issue of credibility raised by some. The interviewees spoken to for this study utilized a combination of the two approaches, measuring numerical and statistical data generated by the training while concurrently using a more subjective standard of measurement which considered context, tone, and subjective interpretation of observed behavior. Because SW research is an emerging field of study, it is especially important to consider an inductive approach that allows theory to manifest as the study unfolds. In order for SW programs to be utilized by organizations whose leaders often want hard numbers in order to determine its usefulness, however, quantitative data must also be generated.

Conclusions

The data generated by this study has shown that the communicative strategies that are utilized to introduce spirit at work principles and practices to organizational members are critical to successful implementation. “Successful implementation,” as discussed above with regard to organizational performance/success, was primarily centered around the perception of positive benefits by organizational members. Because organizational members themselves (trainees) were not interviewed for this project, even these data are second-hand, and thus must be weighted with this in mind.

This study of SW from a communication perspective has revealed several useful factors both for SW practitioners and for organizational representatives who want to implement any

form of SW. The first, and perhaps primary, issue that has been highlighted and reinforced is the importance placed on some form of workplace spirituality by many organizational members. All of the practitioners and organizational representatives interviewed for this project reported that the vast majority of those to whom SW was introduced not only accepted it but embraced it with enthusiasm. The desire for meaningful work, for instance, is something that is shared by the majority of the workforce. Attending to the spiritual needs of workers addresses this desire in two ways. First, it alerts the employee that the organization itself is aware of the connection that exists between the way it conducts business and the impact the organization is making on the world as a whole. Efforts made by organizational leaders to address the spiritual needs of employees are signs of the desire of these leaders to be conscious of and sensitive to this impact. Secondly, since the concept of meaningful work is contained in most SW curriculum, the trainee is made aware of the individual impact his or her work has on both the organization and, by extension, the larger world community.

A second useful issue raised by this research is that the issue of spirituality is a potential minefield through which those introducing the concept must make their way with care. The data collected here demonstrates that the practitioners interviewed were all acutely aware of the need to be vigilant, especially with regard to the words they used when speaking of spiritual issues. All of these practitioners introduced the topic of spirituality with a clear understanding of the possibility of resistance from trainees, adjusting their communicative approach accordingly. Without exception, the practitioners acknowledged that, from their experience, most organizational members are resistant to discussion or training regarding particular religious belief in the workplace. The exception to this is “diversity” training that encourages workers from disparate religious backgrounds to be sensitive to and tolerant of the views of others (Dean

& Safranski, 2008, p. 363). These trainers in the field of spirituality in organizations, however, turned attention away from religion and focused, instead, on more fundamental concepts that underlie most religious practices and beliefs. No one will argue, for instance, that the topic of compassion for coworkers, clients, and others with whom one comes into contact, is something that is out of place in organizational trainings/discussions. This topic, along with others that are central to most religious teachings, was shown to be much more easily addressed by SW practitioners when it is divorced from any particular religious teachings. Numerous topics that were addressed by the practitioners interviewed are central to many religious teachings. The development of meaningful community, trust, the need to be authentic, to express appreciation to others, and the development of the ability to behave in a conscious way are all things that were addressed by those practitioners interviewed. These are aspects of positive human interaction and are appreciated by those with and without a particular religious background.

SW training is more than a reinforcement of positive principles of human interaction, however. In some cases it involves an exploration of those ideas that qualify it as “spiritual” training. As has been discussed, a consensual definition of spirituality has not been reached by researchers or practitioners, but the overwhelming majority agree that it involves the belief in “something transcendent” (Ashforth & Vaidyanath, 2002, p. 360). In some cases that something is supernatural, such as a God or gods, and in other cases this transcendence is seen as a result of natural causes. As noted previously, the teachings of the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) group asks people to accept that there is a “higher power” at work to help members become sober. AA intentionally does not define this power, however, but instead asks members to define it as anything larger than themselves. This larger thing, this higher power, can be defined in religious terms (a deity of some kind) or in non-religious terms (humanity, nature, the universe). The SW

practitioners interviewed for this research followed this model very closely. Rather than provide their own definition of spirituality, they asked participants to offer their definition of it, then worked with what the participants presented. This oblique approach to the topic of spirituality proved to be effective in anticipating and dealing with the resistance that was infrequently encountered among trainees.

Another communicative strategy employed by the practitioners interviewed was to provide the trainees with sufficient information regarding the reasons for and the foundations from which the training was being conducted. Evidence was presented from various disciplines that supported positive outcomes of such training. One practitioner asserted that she worked to make spiritual language acceptable to secular organizations of all types. She stated, “I thought, I’ve got to find a way to make this language compatible with psychology, philosophy, major world religions and whatever...brain science, and quantum physics, biology, whatever was the cutting edge thinking, I wanted it to be compatible.” Before introducing topics that might be considered spiritual, she attempted to lay conclusive scientific groundwork for her work. This practitioner’s specific way of doing this was to introduce a concept called “emotional intelligence,” (ET) a proven method of assessing and improving one’s ability to work well with others (Butts, 1999, p. 329). She then introduces the concept of “spiritual intelligence,” which goes beyond ET’s more secularized approach, while still incorporating the evidenced-based outcomes which underlie the popularity of ET’s methodology.

Implications for Practitioners

Effectively communicating the principles of spirituality to organizations is crucial to the successful implementation of programs that have the potential for improving the worker’s sense

of well-being. An employee who feels that his or her spiritual needs have been addressed is more likely to be a consistent organizational asset, and is more likely to be a happier, more satisfied person. In order to maintain personal and professional integrity, organizational leaders must have the welfare of their organization in mind as they consider the type of training employees will receive. When leaders choose the type of training objectives outlined in most SW literature, they are often doing so for the benefit of the organization as well as the benefit and support of the individual employees whose lives will be enhanced as a result. In order to reach out to organizational leaders, however, SW practitioners of all types must be able to clearly articulate both the evidence-based organizational benefits as well as the positive personal results that will be achieved by such training. Indeed, although there is a difference, these two goals cannot be clearly divided. The data collected in this research suggests that traditionally religious or spiritual language has a high degree of perceptual inadequacy, often creating an inaccurate understanding of the training itself. Instead, with both organizational leaders as well as with those being trained, it seems best to allow them to describe their particular needs, expectations, and spiritual definitions. When the practitioner/trainer/consultant provides his or her own definition(s) of spirituality, presenting this definition in advance, he or she is often dismissed without having the opportunity to credibly present what research has clearly shown to be helpful information and training.

Practitioners of workplace spirituality training would be well advised to follow the example of those interviewed for this research. These trainers had a thorough understanding not only of the subject of workplace spirituality, but of the need to introduce it to participants utilizing a carefully planned and well thought-out communicative strategy. Such a strategy would include the following:

- Be aware of and sensitive to those factors about which organizational representatives who arrange for the training might be cautious. As a part of this, one should be thoroughly conversant with both state and federal laws regarding workplace diversity and religious discrimination. The best information available regarding this issue is available on the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) website (www.eeoc.gov).
- Understand the reasons for and substance of potential organizational and/or employee resistance.
- Know as much about the organization(s) you're asked to work with as possible. Pay specific attention to religious affiliation, and to what history they have had with SW or affiliated training .
- Choose terminology purposefully. Even if an organization asks you to do training that is specifically spiritual in nature, the data collected here suggests that it is best to introduce the topic of spirituality by first identifying how it is conceptualized and articulated by the trainees themselves. Utilize the language of trainees and introduce new language incrementally.
- Make use of evidence from multiple disciplines. Trainers interviewed for this research utilized the evidence-based research regarding the positive effect of SW training that has been conducted in the fields of psychology, sociology, communication studies, neuroscience, and others. Evidence presented from these various disciplines help lay a credible foundation for spirituality training.

Implications for Organizational Representatives

As organizational leaders become more interested in various approaches to SW training, it becomes incumbent on organizational representatives tasked with arranging for training of this type to be well informed regarding several factors. First, organizational representatives interviewed for this paper became aware of the specific needs of employees and formulated goals that addressed these needs along with organizational goals to be achieved through the training.

Definitions

A voluminous amount of research regarding spirituality in the workplace has focused on definitions of spirituality, with numerous results and few agreements (Ashar & Lane-Maher, 2004; Ashforth & Vaidyanath, 2002; Dent, Higgins, & Wharff, 2005; Harlos, 2000). Data collected for this paper shows a tendency for those involved in introducing SW to organizations to acknowledge sensitivity to this potential conceptual obstruction by eliciting personal definitions from training participants themselves. This is done, primarily, by asking them to identify individuals whom the participants respect and to whom they would attach the word “spiritual.” Qualities of these individuals are then compiled and, from these, a definition is then agreed upon. The effectiveness of this method is two-fold: first, participants are very likely to draw individuals who vary widely regarding their religious character and secondly, the ultimate list of qualities generated is also likely to be predictable. This allows the practitioner/trainer to anticipate not only the individuals who are chosen, but the qualities that will be identified qualifying these individuals as “spiritual.” Indeed, Janet, an interviewee who has conducted many of these sessions, stated that they are “always the same answers. This tells me that we collectively know what spirituality is, and we know who has it, we just have not widely

published all this. But if you get a large group of people together...you will get the same list of character traits.”

This practice suggests that attempting to “define the undefinable” (Harlos, 2000, p. 614), is, perhaps, something that does not need to be fully completed in advance in order to effectively introduce spirituality to organizational members. This does not mean that practitioners will not have their own general sense of what is being introduced, but the data gathered for this study proposes that allowing trainees to generate a group definition will gain trust, reduce resistance, and permit participants to be open to the concepts the trainer will be addressing.

Personal and Organizational Outcomes

Much research has been done regarding the organizational outcomes with regard to SW, including “decreased turnover, increased job satisfaction, increased ethical behavior, and increased employee productivity” (Dean & Safranski, 2008, p. 360). Little has been published from the aspect of personal or individual outcomes. Both practitioners and their clients interviewed for this research emphasized that, for most trainees, SW had much more to do with their own experience of spirituality than with how that spirituality affected the organization. One interviewee articulated this well when she said, “when I asked them about their experience of spirit at work, it was about them, they didn’t describe the organization....a lot of people talk about it being an organizational construct.” It seems that there is not a clear delineation between what might be considered organizational versus personal outcomes (Dehler & Welsh, 1994) however, since many of the organizational outcomes outlined above might be aptly applied to the way(s) individuals respond to SW. It would seem prudent, therefore, for SW practitioners to communicate the benefits of workplace spirituality differently to the various stakeholders in a

given organization. When attempting to elucidate the organizational advantages of such a program to organizational leaders, highlighting the positive organizational outcomes will be an appropriate way to convince them that such a program would be worth implementing. When speaking to employees/trainees, a trainer will realize more positive results by emphasizing the more personal, individual outcomes.

Implications for Future Research

There is much discussion among researchers regarding the ability to measure (and, indeed, the need to measure) spirituality among individuals or organizations, and the data collected here indicates that such measurements would be useful. Although some have spent time with this particular task (Kinjerski & Skrypnik, 2004), much more needs to be done in order to explore the most meaningful means of measurement as well as the ways in which such measurement(s) can and should be utilized. Some researchers contend that one of the weaknesses of studies that have been done in organizations regarding spirituality and its measurement is that “the focus is entirely on individual spirituality” (Neal J. , 2009, p. 160). Measurement tools are needed, this researcher notes, that recognize and focus on the “the relationship between the individual and the organization,” (Neal J. , 2009, p. 160) answering questions that are raised with regard to how the spirituality of an organization’s culture affect various aspects of individual performance. The disconnect seems to be that, even when measuring the effect of organizational outcomes of SW, researchers have spent most of their time analyzing the responses of individuals to SW rather than finding ways to examine the organizational culture itself. On the surface, this distinction seems to be a fine one since individual employees are ultimately the ones impacted by SW programs. The major research question that needs to be addressed, however, is: although individuals are the ones directly affected by SW *programs*, are organizations that are

spiritually attuned (or oriented) more effective in establishing positive relationships with employees and/or more effective in their overall performance? This is an area that needs more research in order to more definitively answer this question.

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Appendix A, Consultant/Trainer Interview Questions

These interview questions are designed to gather information regarding the introduction and/or enhancement of Spirit at Work (SW) programs in organizations with which you have worked. Please place specific emphasis on ways you have utilized communication strategies in an effort to effectively implement and/or enhance such programs.

Section 1 - Please think about the specific instances that you have participated in implementing or enhancing SW in organizations and answer the following.

1. What organizations/groups have you worked with to help them to implement new SW programs?
2. What organizations/groups have you worked with to help them to enhance existing SW programs?
3. What reasons did organizational leaders give regarding the reasons they believed that an SW program was desirable?
4. What concerns did organizational leaders express regarding the implementation or enhancement of SW programs?
5. How would you characterize the approach you took in addressing spirituality in these organizations?
6. How did you (and/or the organization's representative) introduce the idea to organizational members? (Please focus specifically on how this issue was communicated).

7. What resistance did you encounter from organization members regarding the introduction or enhancement of the SW program?
8. How did you attempt to overcome any resistance you encountered?
9. Please list the training objectives you identified.
10. Please list the training methods you utilized (again, please focus on the ways you communicated your objectives).
11. Please think about the specific occasions in which you conducted training(s). In hindsight, what might you have done differently to improve the ways in which you communicated the material.
12. As succinctly as possible, please give your definition of “spirituality” in the context of the workplace.

Appendix B, Organizational Representative Interview Questions

These interview questions are designed to gather information regarding the introduction and/or enhancement of Spirit at Work (SW) programs or training in your organization. Please place specific emphasis on the communication strategies that were utilized to implement and/or enhance such programs.

Please think about the specific instances in which you have participated in or observed the implantation or the enhancement of SW programs in your organization and answer the following.

1. Please briefly describe your involvement in the implementation or enhancement of the SW program in your organization.
2. Please explain your (or the organization's) rationale for implementing SW programs.
3. Please describe how this rationale was communicated to organization members.
4. What concerns (if any) did you have with regard to the implementation of SW programs?
5. What resistance did you encounter in the implementation of SW programs (please include exactly how this resistance was communicated).
6. If resistance was encountered, how did the trainer(s) address this resistance?
7. Did you utilize the services of an outside consultant/trainer/facilitator to introduce the SW program(s)?
8. Please indicate how successful the introduction of SW has been in your workplace and list the criteria you use to assess this.

Appendix C, Informed Consent Form

March, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

I am conducting research on the subject of the implementation of In the introduction and/or enhancement of spirituality at work (SW) programs in organizations. Specific emphasis in this study is being placed on the communicative strategies employed in such implementation/enhancement. This research is being conducted for a professional paper to complete the requirements of a masters in communication studies at the University of Montana. I am asking for your participation in a brief survey that will take about one hour to complete. I greatly appreciate your help with this.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. All information will be kept confidential. You may withdraw from this study at any time, without penalty. Please feel free to ask questions if there is anything in the survey that you do not understand.

Although the risks of participating in this study are minimal, the following liability statement is required for all research conducted through the University of Montana:

“In the event that you are injured as a result of this research you should individually seek appropriate medical treatment. If the injury is caused by the negligence of the University or any of its employees, you may be entitled to reimbursement or compensation pursuant to the Comprehensive State Insurance Plan established by the Department of Administration under the authority of M.C.A., Title 2, Chapter 9. In the event of a claim for such injury, further information may be obtained from the University’s Claims

representative or University Legal Counsel. (Reviewed by University Legal Counsel.
July 6, 1993.)”

By returning this survey you are indicating your consent to participate in this study. If you have any further question, please feel free to contact me through the information provided below:

Matt Condon

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406-546-3932

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406-243-4293

Appendix D, Interviewee Information

SW Practitioners

Five SW practitioners were interviewed for this research project. A practitioner is here defined as an individual who has taken part in the introduction of a program of spirit at work to an organization. Information regarding each follows.

- Dr. Sarah Bowen:
 - Gender: Female
 - Age: 37
 - Organization: University of Washington, Department of Psychology, Seattle, WA
 - Role: Research Scientist
 - Years of practice: 5
 - Education: Ph.D., Psychology, University of Washington
 - Organization worked with: Bailey Boushay House, Seattle, WA (see below)
 - Length of interview: 40 minutes

- Dr. Valerie Kinjerski:
 - Gender: Female
 - Age: 54
 - Organization: Kaizen Solutions for Human Services, Alberta, Canada
 - Role: Consultant
 - Years of practice: 15
 - Education: M.S.W., Ph.D.

- Organization worked with: Child and Family Services Authorities (CFSA),
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada (see below)
- Length of interview: 41 minutes
- Dr. Alan Marlatt:
 - Gender: Male
 - Age: 67
 - Organization: University of Washington, Department of Psychology, Seattle, WA
 - Role: Professor and Director of Addictive Behaviors Research Center
 - Years of practice: 37 years
 - Education: Ph.D.
 - Organization worked with: Dr. Marlatt has worked with many organizations in his research regarding the application of mindfulness-based programs as they apply to relapse prevention. None of these organizations were interviewed for this project.
 - Length of interview: 35 minutes
- Dr. Judith Neal:
 - Gender: Female
 - Age: 62
 - Organization: Tyson Center for Faith and Spirituality in the Workplace. Judith Neal and Associates.
 - Role: Consultant/Educator
 - Years of practice: 15
 - Education: Ph.D.

- Organization worked with: Dr. Neal has consulted with organizations regarding the introduction of SW. None of these organizations were interviewed for this project.
- Length of interview: 49 minutes
- Cindy Wigglesworth:
 - Gender: Female
 - Age: 52
 - Organization: Conscious Pursuits, Inc.
 - Role: Consultant
 - Years of practice: 10
 - Education: M.A.
 - Organization worked with: M.D. Anderson Hospital, Houston, TX
 - Length of interview: 45 minutes

Organizational Representatives

Three organizational representatives (OR) were interviewed for this project. Each OR worked directly with and/or participated in the program presented by one of the practitioners listed above.

- James Doyle:
 - Gender: Male
 - Age: 55
 - Organization: Bailey Boushay House, Seattle, WA
 - Type of organization: Treatment center for people with HIV and AIDS

- Role: Counselor
- Years with this organization: 13
- Education: M.A.
- Practitioner worked with: Dr. Sarah Bowen
- Length of interview: 44 minutes
- Susan Gilbert:
 - Gender: Female
 - Age: 54
 - Organization: MD Anderson Hospital, Houston, TX
 - Type of organization: Health care center with a primary focus on cancer treatment
 - Role: Associate Vice President, Global Diversity and Inclusion
 - Education: M.S.
 - Years with this organization: 16
 - Practitioner worked with: Cindy Wigglesworth
 - Length of interview: 37 minutes
- Bill Mullen:
 - Gender: Male
 - Age: 61
 - Organization: Child and Family Services Authorities (CFSA), Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
 - Type of organization: Government department
 - Role: Casework Supervisor
 - Education: M.A.

- Years with this organization: 20
- Practitioner worked with: Dr. Valerie Kinjerski. Mr. Mullen did not play a role in arranging for Dr. Kinjerski to hold a three day seminar for CFSA, but did attend this event.
- Length of interview: 42 minutes

Appendix E

Interview Guide

Interviews with all participants were conducted in a general, interview-guide approach in which data from the same general areas of information were collected from each interviewee. The specific information areas for which responses were solicited are tied directly to the following research questions.

1. How do SW consultants, organizational representatives, and organizational members conceptualize spirituality?
2. What are the most effective ways to communicate the concept of spirituality at work?
3. What communicative strategies can SW practitioners/consultants and organizational leaders utilize to minimize employee resistance and encourage the acceptance of SW?
4. How should trainers/consultants communicate the concept of SW in a way that ensures positive personal and organizational outcomes?

Practitioner Interview Questions

0. General opening statement:

First of all, thank you so much for giving me your time today. As I've told you, the theme of my research is the exploration of communicative strategies involved in introducing spirit at work (SW) training to organizational members. My goal is to find the best ways to communicate SW to organizational members.

1. To begin, would you tell me:
 - a. How long you've been practicing?

- b. What organizations have you conducted training for?
2. What got you interested in doing this kind of training?
3. How do you define the word spirituality in the context of the work you do?
4. How do you perceive that the organizational representatives with whom you deal would define the word spirituality?
 - a. How do you know this?
 - b. Did the trainees articulate these definitions?
 - c. If so, how did they do this?
5. How do you perceive that the organizational members who participate in the training would define the word spirituality?
6. When you first contact (or are first contacted by) organizational representatives, do they clearly articulate what is it they want from the training itself?
 - a. If so, what, specifically, do they say they want?
7. What plan do you have for the communication of SW concepts to trainees?
 - a. Are there any words you specifically avoid?
 - b. Are there words you specifically include?
 - c. If so, why do you avoid (or include) the words that you do?
8. Have you encountered resistance to the introduction of SW?
 - a. If so, from whom did you receive resistance?
 - b. What form(s) did this resistance take?
 - c. How did you address the resistance you experienced?
9. Did you do any assessment of your training outcomes at any point after the training?
 - a. If so, what methods did you use to do this assessment?

- b. What criteria did you use to assess the efficacy of your training?
10. Do you feel that you achieved the goals you had for this training?
11. Is there anything you'd like to add?

Organizational Representative Interview Questions

0. General opening statement:

First of all, thank you so much for giving me your time today. As I've told you, the theme of my research is the exploration of communicative strategies involved in introducing spirit at work (SW) training to organizational members. My goal is to find the best ways to communicate SW to organizational members.

1. To begin, would you tell me:

- a. What your role is within the organization you're with?
 - b. What was your role (if any) in bringing (the SW practitioner) to your organization?
 - c. Did you participate in the training itself?
2. What prompted you (or your organizational leaders) to seek out this type of training?
3. What results did you hope to achieve as a result of the training?
4. How would you define the word spirituality?
5. How do you perceive that the leaders of your organization would define spirituality?
- a. How do you know this?
 - b. Have these leaders articulated these definitions?
 - c. If so, how did they do this?

6. How do you perceive that the organizational members who participated in the training define spirituality?
 - a. How do you know this?
 - b. Did the trainees articulate these definitions?
 - c. If so, how did they do this?
7. How do you perceive that the practitioner with whom you worked defined spirituality?
 - a. How do you know this?
 - b. How did the practitioner articulate his or her definition?
8. Did you meet with any resistance from the trainees regarding the spirit at work training?
 - a. If so, in what ways was it manifested?
 - b. How did you address this resistance?
9. How did the practitioner with whom you worked communicate the concept of spirit at work to the trainees?
 - a. Were you satisfied with the way(s) they did this?
10. Did the practitioner meet with any resistance from trainees regarding his or her material?
 - a. If so, how did he or she handle it?
 - b. Were you satisfied with the way(s) in which it was handled?
11. Was there any assessment of training outcomes performed after the training?
 - a. If so, what methods were used to conduct this assessment?
 - b. What criteria did you use to assess the efficacy of the training?
12. Do you feel like the goals for this training were achieved?
13. Is there anything you would like to add?