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Compassion in Business

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in collaboration with



THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON
COMPASSIONATE ORGANIZATIONS

Note of Thanks!

In the last decade there has been a significant focus on the need for employee engagement. Many exercises, events, in-house surveys and interventions are organized and initiated to identify improvement in performance through higher level commitment from employees. However, a lot of how an employee feels is driven by the prevailing work culture. One of the core components identified in the recent past has been the need to create a less 'toxic' and a more compassionate organization.

Being a founding professional member of The International Working Group On Compassionate Organizations (IWGCO), we have initiated this research project in Pakistan under the umbrella of FNCK Ventures Pvt Ltd. This gave us an opportunity to capitalize on the strengths of each of our group company team members that voluntarily took the time out and contributed over and above their professional responsibilities.

The objective of this research is to understand the current level of compassion in organizations today. While highlighting the objective behind this research, we take the privilege of thanking participating organizations that assisted us with survey responses from employees. Corporate participants will be awarded with a certificate of recognition and appreciation by the IWGCO along with a copy of this research report to give them a better understanding and significance of compassion in business. Since this is the first year and the first time that such an initiative is undertaken, the finding will provide a base year figure. We look forward to their support in the future as well so that over a period of time we can determine progress and the role that a compassionate organization can play towards improving business performance.

This project required a lot of hands-on field research work for which we are thankful to the Field Research team who decided to spend their summer break with us and contribute to this very new concept. Your belief made it possible!

We would like to express gratitude to Navitus Pvt Ltd for providing logistics support and connecting the research team to the companies who have participated in this research. We also appreciate The Bottom Line Holidays (TBLH) and Stimulus Pvt. Ltd for all their time, support and guidance. Thank you Teams Navitus, TBLH and Stimulus! This project could never have been executed without your operational support.

Last but not the least, a special mention for Ari Cowan, Chairman IWGCO, for his constant supervision and support. Really appreciate it, Ari!



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November 21, 2013

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Executive Summary

Compassion is an empathetic feeling that involves the willingness on part of one person to explore another individual's perspectives by trying to relate to his / her position. This is often referred to as 'putting yourself in someone else's shoes'.

The Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education at Stanford University brought together leaders in business and academia to talk about the role of compassion in business. Researchers concluded that workplaces which are more compassionate have more satisfied and stress-free employees with higher levels of employee engagement and loyalty.

Traditional management belief however emphasizes that “customers” create the real value for business. Most companies assume that employee engagement is all it takes to satisfy customers but they forget that it is self engaged employees which help the whole process of employee engagement to take place (Hirschfeld 2010). Employees and managers should work as a team to improve the organization and excel in their performance.

Getting the most out of employees in terms of productivity, creativity and excellence depends on only one thing – relationships. The key lies in knowing that these relationships are built on a high degree of trust. This can be cultivated amongst people within an organization and across an organization i.e. strength of interdependence as well as intra-dependence needs to be leveraged on for success.

The result of Karen Armstrong's 2008 TED Prize wish, 'The Charter for Compassion' is a document that goes beyond religious, ideological, and national differences. The Charter is supported by leading thinkers across several global themes and traditions. It is a mutual effort of all involved to encourage compassionate thinking and action in global religious, moral and political life. Using the 12 steps to compassion as a framework, we contextualized it to business environment within Pakistan.

We often hear in management that culture is the responsibility of senior management and the cliché that 'Fish rots from the top'. While their ability to drive the culture through force, systems and role modelling cannot be denied, a culture is everyone's individual responsibility and not only those at the top. After all, any leader is as good as the society it represents.

Interestingly, organizations that claim to have a great culture, driven by values, may often falter when it comes to how they deal with their people, vendors, agency and third parties. In our experience of eighteen years with affiliates of numerous Fortune 500 companies, the best of companies, in order to guard their own interests, often disregard the needs of external partners.

To promote compassion in society it just makes sense to connect first with people who are educated but snoozed away through complacency. If organizations begin consciously reviewing their level of compassion and assist in creating more self-engaged employees, these employees would then translate and role model for the masses they interact with outside of their businesses too.

This exploratory study was commissioned to gauge how compassion translates into organizational values and is reiterated in the actions of individual employees. The study aims to test the hypothesis established through twenty years experience of working with corporations in Pakistan and abroad in order to assess the impact of a compassionate culture on an organization's financial performance.

For the purpose of this study a questionnaire was developed based on the 12 Step Charter for Compassion. These 12 steps were adapted to reflect perspectives from the corporate sector. Each step (identified as a thematic area) was further divided into 3 specific dimensions, with the aim of examining the extent to which companies promoted compassion at work. A total of 2304 respondents filled an online questionnaire that was sent to the organizations. Their responses were then tabulated and used for further analysis, as a means of baseline research for further studies. Based on these responses, a general trend of understanding and practice of compassion in the workplace amongst corporate organizations in Pakistan has been generated.

Based on the responses a few interesting aspects came to light including the fact that employees are aware of organizational values but a complete ownership of these values, an alignment with personal values and implementation of these values is still lacking. Organizations rank on the borderline of being slightly compassionate to moderately compassionate in terms of organizational values – the culture promoted by the organization and business culture – the way people choose to do business. A clear identification and understanding of business stakeholders (who they are, what they mean to an organization) needs to be explored within organizations.

Finally, there needs to be a clear understanding at senior management / board level of the importance of aspects such as 'Compassion' in workplace, business ethics & CSR – and what they mean to the business – thus ensuring that business strategy of an organization accepts and implements these traits with mind, body, soul.

Introduction to Compassion

Compassion is an empathetic feeling that involves the willingness on part of one person to explore another individual's perspectives by trying to relate to his / her position. This is often referred to as 'putting yourself in someone else's shoes'. In being able to understand other peoples' problem, their pain and frustration, we open up our own hearts and increase our feeling of gratitude. Having to know and help your fellow colleagues in their pain and disturbance brings teamwork into the organization, which is a symbol of growth (Carlson 2008). "Nothing helps us build our perspective more than developing compassion for others", writes Carlson.

Carlson suggests that one can develop compassion with practice by taking time to reflect on the miracles of life – sense, love, experience, pleasure etc. Having a non-materialistic attitude helps develop a sense of gratitude amongst individuals. A materialistic attitude is actually a barrier to one's thoughts (Carlson 2008).

Compassion and associated teachings are practiced in educational institutions and healthcare organizations with significant positive implications. Most schools in Britain are teaching concepts of happiness, empathy, altruism and compassion that have proven to be beneficial for better and quicker learning for students (Rycroft 2012). From a healthcare perspective, ethics and compassion go hand in hand.

In ethical decisions we follow the rules and do the best within our surrounding; while being compassionate we take charge of what we can do to care for our people (McLean 2006).

The role of compassion in the workplace is no longer limited to healthcare organizations and educational institutions. According to Dexcomm, an answering and communications service, a "happy workforce benefits the bottom-line", therefore, "focusing on compassion in the workplace" i.e. caring for people working in the organization and treating them with compassion helps maintain the employee turnover rate. Moreover, compassion is maintained with confidentiality.

A very important concept within corporate culture is organizational interdependence, which can be only effective if compassion is implemented in the broad sense. Interdependence refers to interaction of various departments and sharing of resources for efficient work output. Successful team building to allow organizational interdependence can only take place if employees are compassionate and concerned about each other; understand each other's situations and work towards achieving the same goal (Murray 2013).

Researchers concluded that workplaces which are more compassionate have more satisfied and stress-free employees with higher levels of employee engagement and loyalty.

Executives from Google, Seagate and other firms also supported the fact that the compassionate model has borne fruitful results for their organizations.

Researchers propose that compassion involves a true desire to help and evokes an emotional response. When we treat ourselves and others compassionately we have more concern for others and more ability to forgive. There is also less fear of failure and greater resilience, which is helpful in a work environment. A successful business needs to be data driven and there is data which shows compassion as the bottom-line, hence this is essential for the health of a business (Donald 2013).

"while being compassionate we take charge of what we can do to care for our people" (McLean 2006).

The Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education at Stanford University brought together leaders in business and academia to talk about the role of compassion in business. Latest research shows that a compassionate work environment is more conducive to growth. Researchers concluded that workplaces which are more compassionate have more satisfied and stress-free employees with higher levels of employee engagement and loyalty. "Compassion, fundamentally, defines our humanity," says James Doty. Different professors presented their research findings over self compassion, forgiveness and stress.

Traditional management belief however emphasizes that "customers" create the real value for business. Customers are not only the people who buy a product but are part of the companies' strategies for sales, growth, superior competitive advantage and profitability. Customers are engaged with the company's branding, product and services by sharing it with others.

In his article, "Applying Compassion in Organizations", Daniels E Martin writes that "Consumers are emotional beings, and [training] employees to recognize [that] emotions are responded in a concerned, effective and professional manner is essential to owning the customer experience". According to Dexcomm community services, "Clients who are treated with compassion form a relation with your staff, your organization, and your brand Give you a lifetime customer and brand loyalty" (Dexcomm2013).

However, customer engagement is impossible without employee engagement. In his article, John Baldoni enunciates that highly engaged organizations have twice the rate of success than lower engaged organizations (Baldoni 2013). Jim Harter, a chief scientist at Gallup Research explained "Engaged employees are more attentive and vigilant" (Baldoni 2013). They are attentive towards the needs of their customers as well as their coworkers. Also, engagement improves the lifestyle and health of workers which later help the employees to assist their clients in an enhanced way. Furthermore it is noticed that actively engaged employees are extremely loyal towards the organization which enables them to take that extra effort to keep customers happy.

Most companies assume that employee engagement is all it takes to satisfy customers but they forget that it is self engaged employees which help the whole process of employee engagement to take place (Hirschfeld 2010). For example, if an individual does not feel part of the organization from the start, employee motivational techniques will not make any progress in his/her productivity of that employee.

Being self engaged gives one the ability to engage others; be it your colleagues or customers. It is the job of the organization; both senior and junior management; to take care of the lifestyle and routine of their fellow employees. For starters, organizations can maintain a health chart for their employees where there is a constant check on their lifestyle. Also, if someone from the workplace is unnecessarily taking, rather than jumping to conclusions, the management should see if the employee is facing any personal or financial problems. High rate of absenteeism could also be directed to boredom at work and lack of thrill in the job. Work may have become too routine. It may be debated that some employees may take undue advantage of such leniency, therefore a difference between sympathetic and empathetic behaviors should be kept. Rather than being sympathetic, the management should understand the problems of their employees while taking necessary action.

Thus, on this aspect, Simmons explains that self engagement is everyone's responsibility. Employees and managers should work as a team to improve the organization and excel in their performance. So it can be concluded that while self engagement is responsibility of the workplace, happy and thankful individuals must also return the favor and be committed to the organization (Simmons 2009). In this case, the first step is to be taken by the organization that needs self engaged employees for sustainable loyalty and determination in the company. Thus, based on literature review, we can safely state that self engagement in an organizational context denotes 'Compassion in Business'.



Compassion in Business

Business success is becoming more and more about the ability to attract top talent and then extracting the best possible work from this talent. However, the end objective for business has still not changed. While most companies are claiming to enrich and enhance performance by focusing on other 'soft indicators', target metrics like profit margins, market share and revenue generation are still key success indicators for business. These success indicators are often a result of control, power and influence; which in turn drive and at times dominate people – the employees that make the organization run and are responsible for delivering on key success indicators.

Getting the most out of employees in terms of productivity, creativity and excellence depends on only one thing – 'relationships'. The key lies in knowing that these relationships are built on a high degree of trust. This can be cultivated amongst people within an organization and across an organization i.e. strength of interdependence as well as intra-dependence needs to be leveraged on for success.

"I believe that the best way to develop a high-performance business for the long haul is to develop a caring, high-trust, relationship-centric culture. These cultures nurture a sense of purpose, of connection, and of compassion, where the business results we can measure are not the first priority of the enterprise, but rather a consequence enjoyed when leaders and teams practice the primary goal of building a caring community every day", writes Scott Kriens, Chairman of the Board of Directors and ex-CEO of Juniper Networks.



Charter for Compassion

The result of Karen Armstrong's 2008 TED Prize wish, 'The Charter for Compassion' is a document that goes beyond religious, ideological, and national differences. The Charter is supported by leading thinkers across several global themes and traditions.

It is a mutual effort of all involved to encourage compassionate thinking and action in global religious, moral and political life. Compassion as a concept lies at the heart of all religious and ethical systems.



The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.

It is also necessary in both public and private life to refrain consistently and empathically from inflicting pain. To act or speak violently out of spite, chauvinism, or self-interest, to impoverish, exploit or deny basic rights to anybody, and to incite hatred by denigrating others—even our enemies—is a denial of our common humanity. We acknowledge that we have failed to live compassionately and that some have even increased the sum of human misery in the name of religion.

We therefore call upon all men and women to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion ~ to return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred or disdain is illegitimate ~ to ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions and cultures ~ to encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity ~ to cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings—even those regarded as enemies.

We urgently need to make compassion a clear, luminous and dynamic force in our polarized world. Rooted in a principled determination to transcend selfishness, compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological and religious boundaries. Born of our deep interdependence, compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity. It is the path to enlightenment, and indispensable to the creation of a just economy and a peaceful global community.

Exploring Compassion in Business in Pakistan

We often hear in management that culture is the responsibility of senior management and the cliché that 'Fish rots from the top'. While their ability to drive the culture through force, systems and role modelling cannot be denied, a culture is everyone's individual responsibility and not only those at the top. After all, any leader is as good as the society he/she represents. The interactions that happen over lunch, side meetings, smoking corners and elevators are not senior management's influence. An organization chooses its character and personality through its behaviours in those causal settings. Thus it is evident that culture is the delicate balance between what employees believe in and what the organization cascades as organizational values to its employees.

In today's dynamic and highly volatile lifestyle, where professionals could be flying a minimum of 15-20 hours a month, spending on average 160-220 hours at work, 50 hours commuting and 180 hours sleeping, people really don't have time for so called work-life balance. While everyone realizes the importance of staying healthy and exercising, the reinforcement in compassionate organizations needs to come from the management and culture of the organization. One food and nutrition company we worked with ensured and monitored employees' health stats and encouraged them to use the gym facility at work place. Employees were encouraged to have breakfast and arrangements for the same were made at workplace. We still have to see a company that ties performance appraisal to a person's health stats and rewards healthy behaviours. Interestingly organizations that claim to have a great culture, driven by values, may often falter when it comes to how they deal with their people, vendors, agency and third parties. In our experience of 18 years with affiliates of numerous Fortune 500 companies, the best of companies, in order to guard their own interests, often disregard the needs of external partners. For example, in order to improve their own working capital management, companies often delay payments of smaller vendors and then find great pride in running business with OPM (other people's money). This may not be a behaviour that the top management would like but people in the middle management engage in such 'fun' activities. Suddenly the corporate values are sidelined for hard core business metrics. It is easy to give lip service to compassion but at the end of the day all businesses need to identify role models of compassion. These role models help define the culture through their actions. They are individuals who people look up to as mentors. Compassion is an easy word which has perhaps become very difficult because of lack of contextualized action.

Our world is a beautiful place and in spite of all the so-called evil that happens around us, the world still continues. Post 9/11 we noticed a sudden change in the world. Where on one end there was war unleashed and WMD (full form) conspiracy theories on the rise, the common human being became more considerate and accommodating. Life suddenly had a greater meaning. This trend was observed till we were all hit by a global recession. All of a sudden the need to protect self, save own job, and bias for 'my people' crept in. This is a clear indicator that goodness when tested in trying times, often cages itself into a cocoon of self protection. While this is a major global subject and analysis, it is evident that people cross their boundaries of respect and what one would call 'humanity', when they are under stress. We recently heard of a story in a company going through such demanding targets where the senior manager grabbed another by the shoulder and pulled him outside the office after he was asked to submit resignation. We leave this up to you to decide if this is an acceptable behaviour irrespective of the situation.

Culturally and historically, people in the Sub –Continent are known for their warm hospitality and compassion. The origin is driven by excessive respect. This is to the extent of often being submissive. It is what we would like to believe purely a relationship economy. Sadly, the impact of War against Terrorism and frequent news of terrorism, war, attacks, security lapse, media positioning of Pakistan, has done more to harm the level of compassion of a common man than anything else. The common man here is not a terrorist and believes in compassion and basic human ethics. Yet the cloud of negativity has immunized this common man to close to an apathetic business community and moreover a society that does not bother taking time to reflect in its 'busyness'. To promote compassion in society it just makes sense to connect first with people who are educated but snoozed away through complacency. If organizations begin consciously reviewing their level of compassion and assist in creating more self-engaged employees, these employees would then translate and role model for the masses they interact with outside of their businesses too.

Exploring 'Compassion in Business' in Pakistan

Using the 12 steps to compassion as a framework, we contextualized it to the business environment within Pakistan. This is the first study hence, the scope is restricted to gauge baseline results. This study was conducted in Karachi with **21** companies across **7** industries including **2304** individual respondents.

Karachi

Linking the Charter for Compassion to Corporate Dimensions

- During internal meetings, the focus is more on raising standards as opposed to harming competition
- The organization can differentiate between disliking and being disrespectful
- Defined business ethics take priority over unfair and morally unacceptable business practices
- Negatively labelling people and departments is openly discouraged
- Talent is exposed to opportunity in the organization without bias and favoritism
- Everyone trusts that no one will take undue credit for someone else's work and effort
- The organization encourages people to learn about other countries/regions/provinces
- Understanding of diversity is encouraged and the organization defines it for business
- Inter-departmental challenges are shared and discussed openly
- Employee engagement surveys and indices are regularly used for supporting improved performance
- CSR has a strategic role in the business and everyone within the organization has defined it for business
- When the organization cannot say 'Yes' to every request, it helps people understand and provide an honest and supportive response that does not justify but explains the 'No'
- In an argument, seniority, education and/or experience is not used to prove rightfulness.
- Discussion and dialogue is encouraged over debate that have a win/loss focus
- Even in case of an unfavourable and unpopular decision, individual self-esteem and self-respect is honored
- Change and innovation is a way of life in the organization
- Mistakes are encouraged if they support learning (but repeating same mistakes in not learning)
- People are encouraged to self-reflect prior to being accused



- Use of the word 'Compassion' is part of the business language at work
- The organization has defined what compassion means as a term to employees
- The organization derives energy, enthusiasm and inspiration from stories of compassionate and assertive change catalysts as opposed to warriors and war
- Make a conscious effort to ensure that the culture is pleasant
- The organization promotes a culture of compassion among all vendors and business partners
- Humanity and respect is not compromised even during stress
- Career aspirations of employees is understood and support is given for their personal development
- Guidance and encouragement to have a healthy lifestyle is provided
- People working within the organization see an alignment between personal and organizational goals
- Organization listens to customers (internal and external) with respect and understanding
- Understanding of a situation is encouraged over judgemental decisions
- Distinction between sympathy and empathy
- Organization pays attention to little things and appreciates progress as opposed to only celebrating achievement of goals
- The culture promotes an environment that laughs with each other and not laugh at each other
- Jokes and fun at the expense of race, creed, religion and gender are not tolerated
- Accountability and feedback are taken very seriously in an organization, supporting a principle-driven culture
- The corporate values and code of conduct have meaning and employees are encouraged to translate them into actions and decisions
- Businesses should have role models of compassion

Charter for Compassion

1

LEARN ABOUT COMPASSION

Education involves practice and reaching a level of the mind deeper than the purely rational. Learn about your own religion, but also about others.

Corporate Dimension

- Use of the word 'Compassion' is part of the business language at work
- The organization has defined what compassion means as a term to employees
- The organization derives energy, enthusiasm and inspiration from stories of compassionate and assertive change catalysts as opposed to warriors and war

EMBODYING COMPASSION

Explanation:

In order for compassion to be part of the corporate culture, it should be more than just fluffy and meaningless words that are put up on the wall. A company's ethos described through its corporate values is the best indicator of visible integrity in an organization's description. Values need to be practiced and compassion needs to become part of the corporate lingo. Only when one knows of the word - 'Compassion' and understands what it means, can one believe in it and eventually start practicing it. Words without appropriate meaning merely give birth to noise.

Embodying compassion is not a chance, but a conscious choice for people who would like to see compassion as a driving force in their business.



Charter for Compassion

2

LOOK AT YOUR WORLD

Compassionate lives can only be sought if we step back and see our world in a different perspective. The problems of the present cannot be solved by anger and frustration instead we must look at our community with compassion, estimate its strengths as well as its weaknesses, and assess its potential for change.

Corporate Dimension

- Make a conscious effort to ensure that the culture is pleasant
- The organization promotes a culture of compassion among all vendors and business partners
- Humanity and respect is not compromised even during stress

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Explanation:

The true strength of a culture (be it in any society or work setting) is best tested under great pressure and stress to deliver. At times like these, employers need to help employees understand what values and attributes they are expected to uphold. Management truly needs to practise what they preach.

Compassionate organizations allow people the space and time to reflect. They take time before looking for scapegoats to blame on.



Charter for Compassion

3

COMPASSION FOR YOURSELF

Love your neighbour as yourself – if you cannot love yourself, you cannot love other people either. Once you have started to feel a genuine compassion for yourself, you will be able to extend it to others.

This Golden Rule, requires "Self Knowledge".

Corporate Dimension

- Career aspirations of employees is understood and support is given for their personal development
- Guidance and encouragement to have a healthy lifestyle is provided
- People working within the organization see an alignment between personal and organizational goals

COMPASSION FOR INDIVIDUALS

Explanation:

Managers need to understand that promoting a certain kind of organizational culture begins with self. Employees' perceptions, today, about whether they are growing (intellectually and career-wise) with their companies compel them to stick around or look for a new job. Thus, while training focuses on improving skills, coaching pays attention to grooming a person. Hence, mentoring and coaching has taken a more critical role. In addition, companies also try to provide their employees with more recreational opportunities to keep them engaged.



Charter for Compassion

4

EMPATHY

Although we may be reluctant to become involved in the suffering of others, we should remember that we most likely experienced our own time of misery when a kind word, a smile or a reassurance lifted us from despair.

Corporate Dimension

- Organization listens to customers (internal and external) with respect and understanding
- Understanding of a situation is encouraged over judgemental decisions
- Distinction between sympathy and empathy

EMPATHY

Explanation:

It is important to encourage an empathetic environment at work. Before judging anyone or making decisions, it is important to understand the other person's perspective and try to identify the actual reason of any problem instead of merely assuming based on how things appear to be. For the same purpose, it is important to listen with respect and understanding. One should listen to people patiently just as he/she would want others to listen to him.

While many people are able to define empathy as 'putting yourself in other person's shoe', not many people can distinguish between sympathy and empathy. Feeling sorry for someone and then perhaps compromising on priorities and principles is anything but empathy. Empathy ought to make a person strong and not weak. Sympathy weakens people from taking the right decision based on principles. For example, allowing and treating non-performers in your team just like you would treat performers may be sympathetic, but shows no empathy toward the performers.



Charter for Compassion

5

MINDFULNESS

In mindfulness we mentally stand back and observe our behavior while we are engaged in the normal processes of living in order to discover more about the way we interact with people, what makes us angry and unhappy, how to analyze our experiences, and how to pay attention to the present moment.

Corporate Dimension

- Organization pays attention to little things and appreciates progress as opposed to only celebrating achievement of goals
- The culture promotes an environment that laughs with each other and not laugh at each other
- Jokes and fun at the expense of race, creed, religion and gender are not tolerated

AWARENESS

Explanation:

Employers and managers need to consciously observe what is happening around them and pay attention to minor details. Targeting social groups is considered common today and any group deemed different from the rest becomes an easy target. Diversity must be respected and encouraged instead of being mocked and joked about.

It is said that laughter is the language of angels. It needs to be genuine and authentic as opposed to be driven by the insult of another soul.



Charter for Compassion

6

ACTION

It is important to see the value of random acts of kindness. Armstrong calls on people to create 'spots of time' for other people when you show 'little, nameless, unremembered, acts of kindness and love.'

Corporate Dimension

- Accountability and feedback are taken very seriously in an organization, supporting a principle-driven culture
- The corporate values and code of conduct have meaning and employees are encouraged to translate them into actions and decisions
- Businesses should have role models of compassion

ACTION

Explanation:

A principle-oriented and not person-oriented culture is desirable. A work environment in which one can disagree with his or her superiors and employers, if based on principles, is characteristic of a compassionate organization.

Employers should 'lead by example' to transfer the culture they want. Showing people what is required of them (through verbal and more importantly, nonverbal communication) can be highly productive. It is important to remember that action and feedback go in hand in hand.



Charter for Compassion

7

HOW LITTLE WE KNOW

Too often we impose our own experience and beliefs on acquaintances and events, in ways that result in hurtful, inaccurate, and dismissive snap judgments, not only about individuals but about whole cultures. Thus, Karen has a threefold purpose to this point: To recognize and appreciate the unknowable; To become sensitive to overconfident assertions; and To make ourselves aware of the numinous mystery of each human being.

Corporate Dimension

- Change and innovation is a way of life in the organization
- Mistakes are encouraged if they support learning (but repeating same mistakes in not learning)
- People are encouraged to self-reflect prior to being accused

LEARNING

Explanation:

Today's workforce cherishes a constant drive to seek and learn, otherwise, boredom and job dissatisfaction arise. Such an on-going process is conducive in a learning environment. In an open and innovative culture, mistakes are bound to occur. Employees, at all levels, should be allowed to self-reflect and rectify their mishaps.

Making mistakes is part of the innovation process. There has to be a degree of tolerance to genuine mistakes. At the same time, the intent and focus must be on "what did we learn" and "what do we know now". Repetition of mistakes and tolerating them is not compassion. It is accepting mediocrity.



Charter for Compassion

8

HOW SHOULD WE SPEAK TO ONE ANOTHER

We should make a point of asking ourselves whether we want to win the argument or seek the truth, whether we are ready to change our views if the evidence is sufficiently compelling, and whether we are making 'place' for the other in our minds....Above all, we need to listen.

Corporate Dimension

- In an argument, seniority, education and/or experience is not used to prove rightfulness.
- Discussion and dialogue is encouraged over debate that have a win/loss focus
- Even in case of an unfavourable and unpopular decision, individual self-esteem and self-respect is honored

COMMUNICATION

Explanation:

Communication can be defined as 'sharing of meaning'. In a compassionate organization, people give "reason" in an argument; one's seniority, background, social influence or expertise is not used to defy logic and 'boss is always right' mentality is minimized. In such organizations a principle-based decision should always be preferred over only a popularity-driven decision



Charter for Compassion

9

CONCERN FOR EVERYBODY

All religious traditions and schools of thought emphasize on extending love and compassion beyond our own group. Becoming more multicultural and living side by side with people of different backgrounds brings tensions. Somehow we must find a more mature and compassionate way to deal with these modern conflicts.

Corporate Dimension

- Employee engagement surveys and indices are regularly used for supporting improved performance
- CSR has a strategic role in the business and everyone within the organization has defined it for business
- When the organization cannot say 'Yes' to every request, it helps people understand and provide an honest and supportive response that does not justify but explains the 'No'

CONCERN FOR EVERYONE

Explanation:

Management should be direct and clear about values the organization stands on and propagates. These values encompass CSR, corporate governance, regulation and standards from an external purview. At the same time values engage employees and ensure internal customer satisfaction, resulting in higher business and social returns for the organization.



Charter for Compassion

10

KNOWLEDGE

Armstrong says that deciphering the cultural, religious, and political customs of other people requires more time and energy than most people are willing to expend. But, she says, "We owe it to our nation and to others to develop a wider, more pan-optic knowledge and understanding of our neighbors."

Corporate Dimension

- The organization encourages people to learn about other countries/regions/provinces
- Understanding of diversity is encouraged and the organization defines it for business
- Inter-departmental challenges are shared and discussed openly

KNOWLEDGE

Explanation:

An open and welcoming approach towards diversity gives way to newer horizons for the business. One can only respect diversity, if he/she knows about people from different cultural backgrounds. Understanding and recognition is important to eventually honour and respect diversity. There are differences in lifestyles (working styles) and cultures globally as well as locally and even inter departmentally.



11

Charter for Compassion

RECOGNITION

A number of stories are narrated to argue that alleviating the pain of others can make you much happier. Karen suggests that if we want to achieve reconciliation (with an enemy), not only do we have to struggle with the enemy, but we also have to wrestle with ourselves.

Corporate Dimension

- Negatively labelling people and departments is openly discouraged
- Talent is exposed to opportunity in the organization without bias and favoritism
- Everyone trusts that no one will take undue credit for someone else's work and effort

RECOGNITION

Explanation:

Successful companies have recognized the hazards of negatively stereotyping and looking down upon people. Thus, some companies strictly follow **zero tolerance policy towards such language**. A compassionate organization ensures a merit based system of appraisal and career growth. Hence there are no fears or insecurities of undue advantage or work being taken from subordinates or their contributions not being fully recognized.



12

Charter for Compassion

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

In our global village, we must make allies of our enemies. This kind of love and concern for everybody will serve our interest better than short-sighted, self-serving policies.

Corporate Dimension

- During internal meetings, the focus is more on raising standards as opposed to harming competition
- The organization can differentiate between disliking and being disrespectful
- Defined business ethics take priority over unfair and morally unacceptable business practices

COMPETITION

Explanation:

Compassionate organizations are concerned with what they can offer to the market (innovation), instead of what can be done to match or bring down competitors.

Such organizations do not have a myopic vision. Their managers' focus is on what they can bring to the market, and are subsequently more innovative and productive than the ones which only try to outsmart the competitor. Competition is identified and respected. The organization does not indulge in unethical actions even if it is practiced across the industry





Objective

This exploratory study was commissioned to gauge how compassion translates into organizational values and is reiterated in the actions of individual employees.

The study aims to test the hypothesis established through twenty years experience of working with corporations in Pakistan and abroad¹ in order to assess the impact of a compassionate culture on an organization's financial performance.

Corporate Profile:

Twenty one companies listed on the Karachi Stock Exchange across 7 industries participated in this study. These companies represented the following industries:

- 1. Shipping and Logistics
- 2. Communication and Media
- 3. Telecom
- 4. FMCG
- 5. Pharmaceutical
- 6. Textile
- 7. Finance

The senior and middle management of these most responsive and innovative companies participated in this survey and shared their views on thirty six areas highlighted in the questionnaire.

Research Design:

For the purpose of this study a questionnaire was developed based on the 12 Step Charter for Compassion. These 12 steps were adapted to reflect perspectives from the corporate sector. Each step (identified as a thematic area) was further divided into 3 specific dimensions, with the aim of examining the extent to which companies promoted compassion at work.

Each dimension was presented as a statement in order to examine the behaviors in an individual's working environment and thereby, drawing a comparison between the 12 Steps Charter for Compassion and a compassionate corporate culture, supported by means of this study.

The participants were requested to rate each statement on a scale of 1 – 6, with 1 being “Highly Uncompassionate” and 6 being “Highly Compassionate”. Each statement was assessed by participants in light of their behaviors at work. 2304 respondents filled an online questionnaire that was sent to the organizations. Their responses were then tabulated and used for further analysis, as a means of baseline research for further studies. Based on responses, a general trend of the understanding and practice of compassion in the workplace amongst corporate organizations in Pakistan has been generated. Compassion in organizations can be scored using the following scale:

Scale:			
1 – 10%	Highly Uncompassionate	51 – 70%	Slightly Compassionate
11 – 30%	Moderately Uncompassionate	71 – 90%	Moderately Compassionate
31 – 50%	Slightly Uncompassionate	91 – 100%	Highly Compassionate

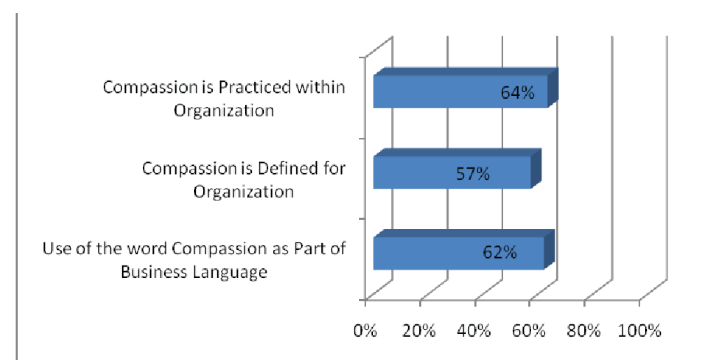
¹Extensive experience in industries such as agro sciences and chemicals, pharmaceuticals, automobiles and engineering, banking and finance, retail, leisure/hospitality, FMCGs, beverage, telecoms, oil and gas (upstream and downstream), energy, IT , media, and many others.

Findings and Analysis

Embodying Compassion – Slightly Compassionate

Based on the responses received, organizations secured a score of 62% for the use of the word 'Compassion' as part of their business language at work. Against that respondents felt that only 57% organizations properly defined the term within their work places and in their respective teams. This suggests that a greater majority included compassion as an organizational value but failed to define it as an organizational practice.

It was interesting to note that majority of the respondents shared that compassion was demonstrated by others at work, as a source of energy and inspiration for people at their workplaces. Securing the highest score i.e. 64% in this dimension signifies that perhaps compassion is not formally a point of focus for an organization; however this value is practiced by most of the staff as a personal value. Overall, the organizations have managed to secure a ranking of a "Slightly Compassionate" in this thematic area.



Organizational Culture – Moderately Compassionate

An organization's culture is truly reflected in the attitude of its employees when they are under stress to deliver. How an organization fares then, embodies philosophy of 'practice what you preach' at the management level. At 78%, most of the responses suggested that their organizations were making an effort to ensure that the culture is pleasant.

Based on the responses, interviewees scored their organizations at 69% for taking responsibility for promoting a culture of compassion amongst organizational stakeholders. It is important to note that the external stakeholders were not significantly recognized as contributors to an organization's culture. While leading progressive companies are including every stakeholder that forms a part of their value chain, we noticed a distinct separation of internal and external stakeholders in this case. Examples of such inclusions of external stakeholders vary from coffee bean farmers and ethical trading internationally and a few leading dairy companies investing in the development of rural women in Pakistan. It is interesting to note that this area seems yet unexplored by most companies based on the responses received.

Barely touching the "Moderately Compassionate" category for this thematic area, respondents' indicated that organizations did not compromise on humanity and respect under stress, no matter what the situation is thus securing 71% for this dimension. This reflects decision making is value based and on principles.

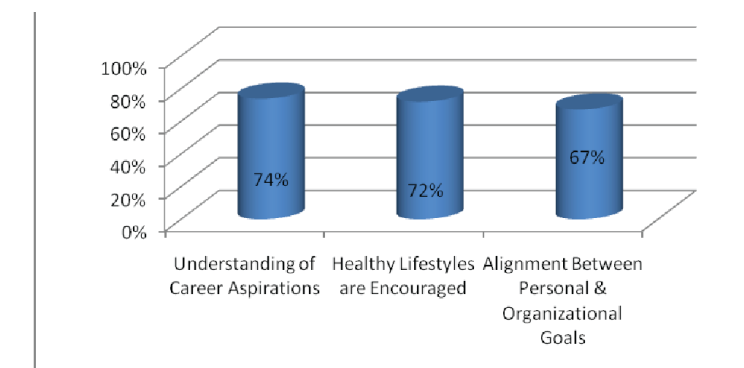


Compassion for Individuals – Moderately Compassionate

It is important to nurture and grow individuals working for a company to promote a sense of ownership and alignment with the organization. An organization is only as strong as the individuals that make it, and individuals are becoming more and more conscious of how they fit in an organization based on their alignment with corporate values.

Organizations are now very supportive of personal development of employees and take extra care to understand employees' career aspirations. Individuals scored their organizations at a 74% on this aspect. In providing encouraging opportunities for a healthy lifestyle, respondents indicated a similar score of 72%. However, they scored their companies at only 67% when asked about an alignment between the organizational and individual goals suggesting a difference in mindsets.

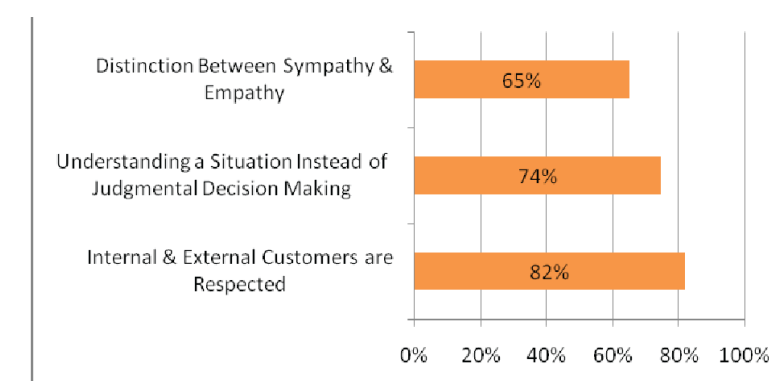
Overall the responses on all three dimensions were similar and indicated an alignment in this thematic area, thus categorized as "Moderately Compassionate"



Empathy – Moderately Compassionate

This was one of the most interesting aspects to explore. Based on our findings, most organizations do make an effort to listen to and understand their internal and external customers, there by demonstrating an element of respect. This was indicated by a relatively high score of 82% for the organizations being assessed on the higher side of 'moderately compassionate' category. However, when it came to understanding situations as opposed to making a judgmental decision, the respondents evaluated their organizations at only 74%. Sadly, very few organizations are able to make a distinction between sympathy and empathy as is evident by a drop in the score to 65%.

Overall the organization has managed to secure a "Moderately Compassionate" category in this thematic area.

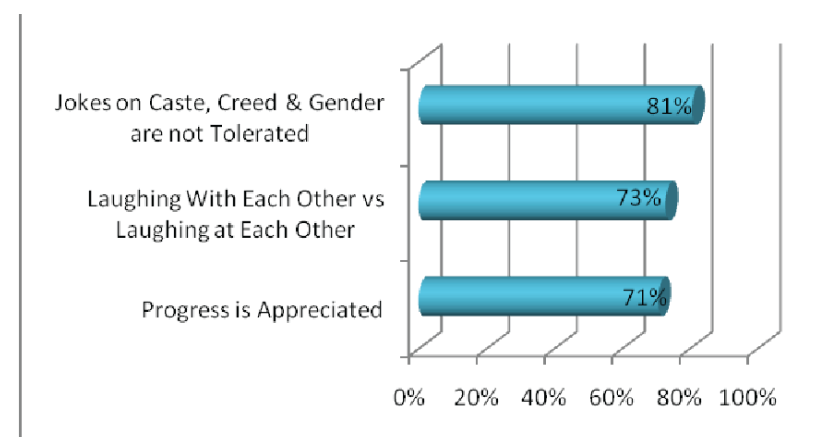


Awareness – Moderately Compassionate

In order to respect, embrace and encourage diversity it is important to be mindful of the small things that happen in an organization. The celebration of diversity ensures that all employees are able to perform their best in helping the organization succeed based on their distinctive pluralistic strengths.

Interestingly, respondents scored organizations at 71% highlighting that their organizations appreciated progress as opposed to celebrating end goals. Close to this score at 73%, individuals felt that a culture of appreciation enables employees to laugh with each other instead of at each other.

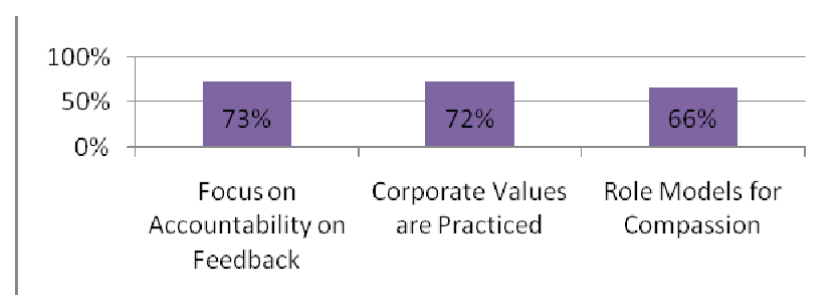
What was heartening to note indeed is that most organizations took strict notice of jokes being made on caste, creed and gender. With a relatively higher score of 81% for this dimension, it clearly showed that such humor was not tolerated in most organizations. Overall, organizations secured a ranking in “Moderately Compassionate” category for this thematic area.



Action - Moderately Compassionate

The objective of this area was to gauge if organizations were principle centered and whether management was actually led by example. Overall organizations were categorized as “Slightly Compassionate” in this thematic area.

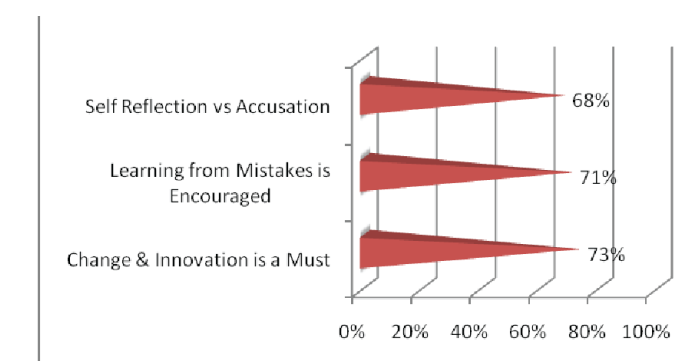
Based on the responses received, the survey scored that 73% of the organizations had a corporate culture where accountability and feedback was taken seriously. In practicing corporate values i.e. the values have meaning for individual employees and are translated into actions, respondents scored an affirmative 72%. It appears that role models for compassionate business / organizations are extremely rare to find with a score of 66% on this dimension.



Learning – Moderately Compassionate

There is a constant desire in today's workforce to seek and learn – otherwise monotony and job dissatisfaction arise. In this thematic area, organizations have barely made it to the “Moderately Compassionate” category.

A score of 73% indicated that organizations mandated change and innovation as an organizational way of life. In line with this dimension, the survey shared a score of 71% for organizations which encouraged a culture of learning from mistakes. A relatively lower score of 68% indicated that people reflected on mistakes rather than accusing them. This relative drop in percentage demonstrates the diminished opportunity to learn from mistakes.



Communication – Slightly Compassionate

A trait of empathic organizations is that they listen and understand. The key lies in not just listening but also considering the information they have listened to, while making decisions. It is interesting to note that in the previous thematic area of 'Empathy', respondents suggested that although organizations listened to them, they still made judgmental decisions instead of attempting to understand individual point of views. This was further highlighted in this dimension, where respondents scored their organizations at 67% to suggest that seniority, education and/ or experience was used to prove rightfulness instead of reason and logic. Thus validating the claim that decisions were not made primarily on the information provided, instead it was manipulated by other factors such as educational background, experience etc.

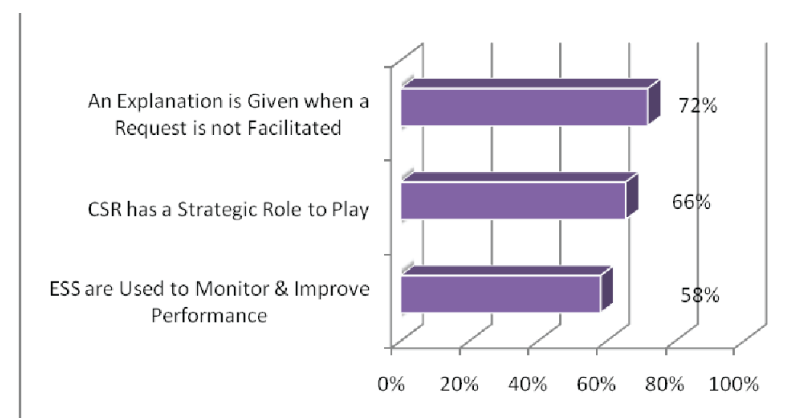
Organizations were given an equal score of 71% by respondents on the remaining two dimensions, namely “use of discussion instead of a debate” and “respecting self esteem over an unpopular decision”. Averaging out at 70%, organizations were categorized as “Slightly Compassionate” in this thematic area.



Concern for Everyone – Slightly Compassionate

Exploring whether management in organizations is clear about values that govern it had a mixed response. Based on the scores, respondents highlighted that 58% organizations engaged employees for constructive feedback and performance improvement. In terms of defining and recognizing corporate social responsibility, organizations secured a score of 66%. With a survey score of 72%, the respondents categorized the organizations as “Moderately Compassionate” in sharing explanation with employees when specific requests are not facilitated.

Overall, the organizations were categorized as “Slightly Compassionate” in this thematic area.

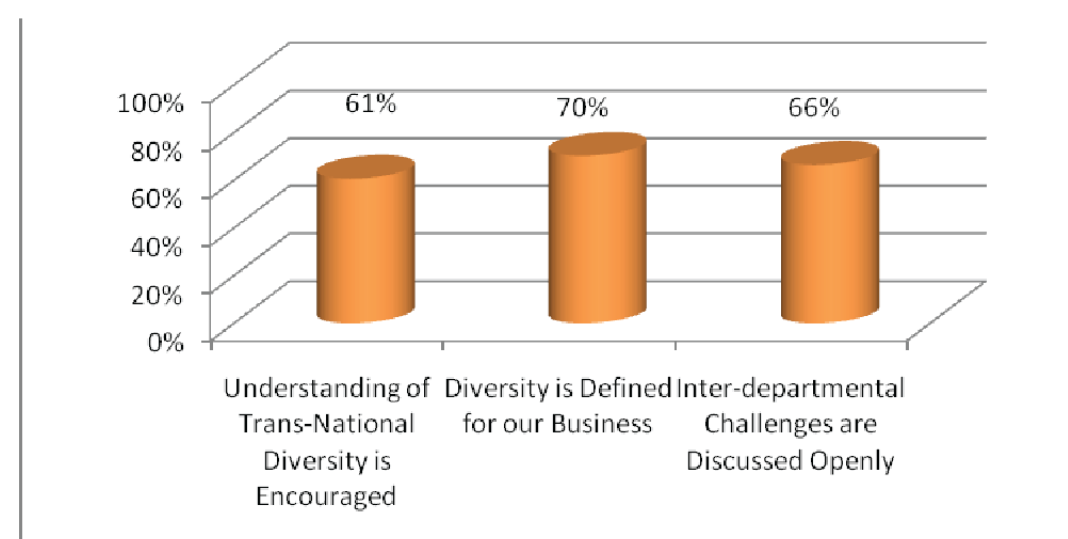


Knowledge – Slightly Compassionate

This is a particularly interesting category to explore from the multi-cultural and trans-global perspectives for organizations that seek to do business across borders. Individuals evaluated that 61% organizations encouraged their employees to learn about different regions/provinces/countries. Due to shifts in the global demand and supply market, this specific area has been identified as the key for thriving during economic recession; however, responses suggested a lower focus in this area by organizations.

In line with the responses received regarding diversity at work, respondents scored their organizations at 70% to indicate how companies encouraged an understanding of diversity as a global concept. However, they gave a relatively low score of 66% when asked about inter-departmental understanding and discussion of challenges.

Overall the organizations were categorized as “Slightly Compassionate” in this thematic area.

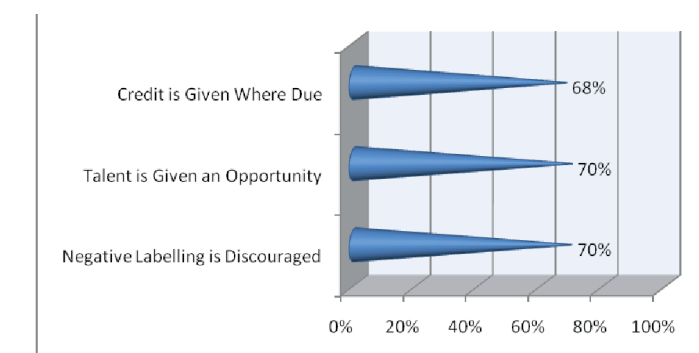


Recognition – Slightly Compassionate

It is interesting to note that although a greater percentage of respondents who highlighted that organizations did not tolerate jokes based on personal aspects in the earlier dimension (i.e. third dimension in the thematic area of “Awareness”) have reduced their score to 70% in this dimension. According to respondents, a lower percentage (drop of 10%) felt that negative labeling of employees and departments was discouraged. It seems that for a company to follow a zero tolerance policy for stereo-typing, it is critical for particular stereo types to be recognized.

Similarly a score of 70% indicates that talent was given an opportunity without bias or discrimination. Incidentally, companies secured an even lower score of 68% in giving credit where credit is due.

Overall, organizations were categorized as “Slightly Compassionate” in this thematic area.

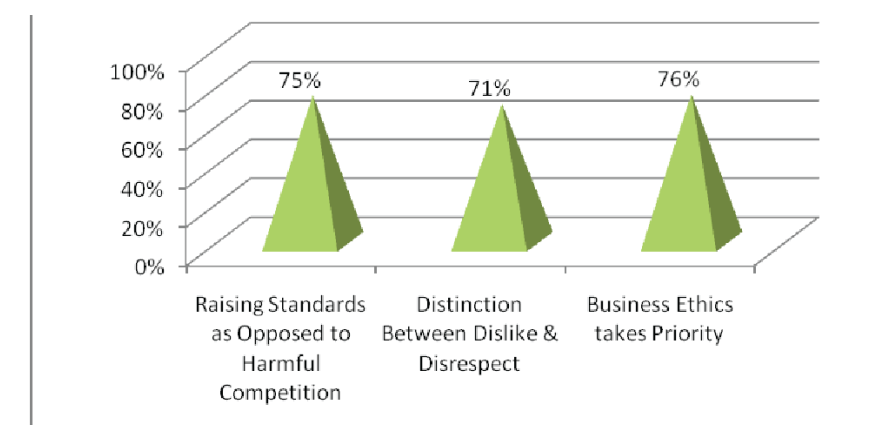


Competition – Moderately Compassionate

Companies fared slightly better on this thematic area of competition, thus being categorized as “Moderately Compassionate”.

Based on the responses received, a score of 75% indicated that organizations were geared towards raising performance standards as opposed to encouraging harmful competition. Moreover, with a score of 71%, respondents also highlighted that organizations were able to differentiate between dislike and disrespect. It was also shared that in their organizations business ethics was given priority over harmful business practice and therefore this dimension was scored at 76%.

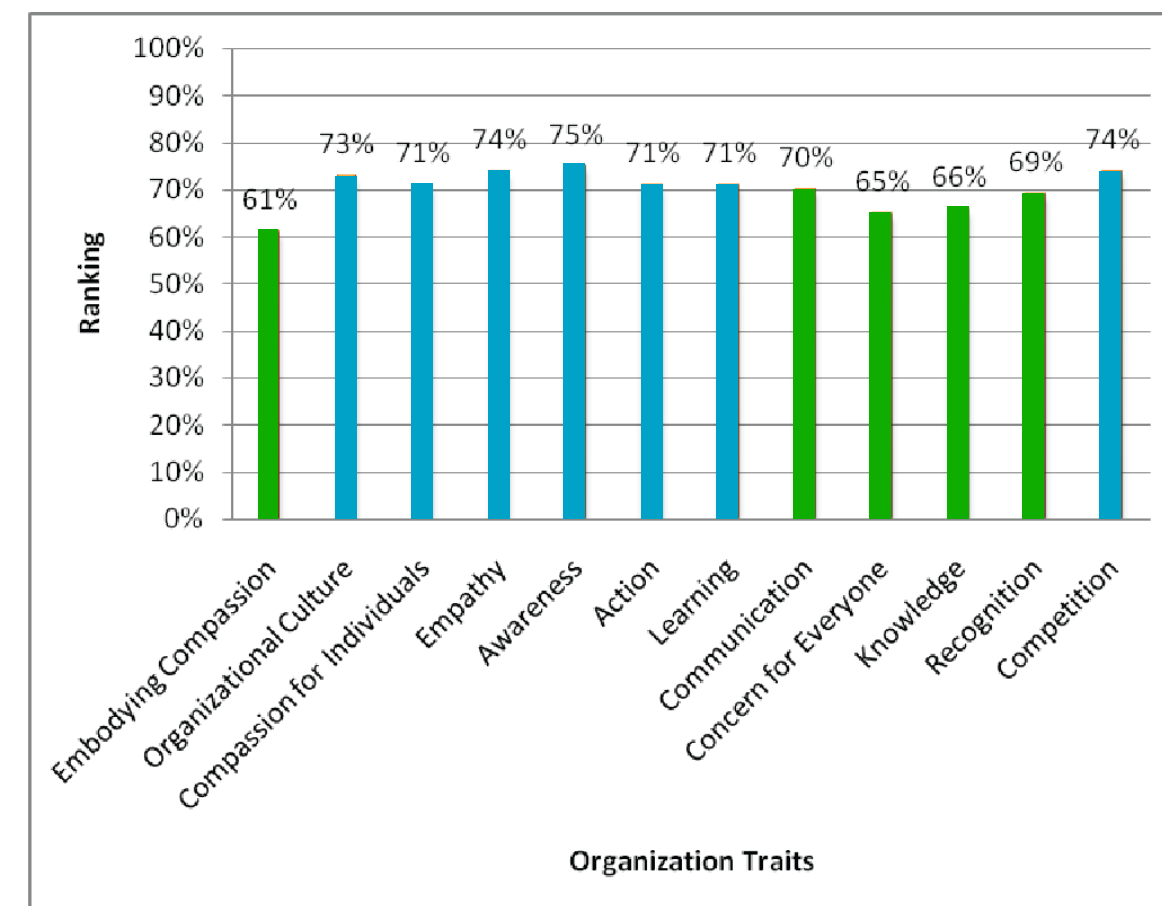
We can speculate how much of this can be attributed to recognizing and practicing compassion in the business environment. It is probable that in the changing scenario of global business and economy, businesses have to change their strategy to remain competitive in their industries without harming their bottom line. A fair and ethical organization that has managed to sustain its growth has a greater chance of success as opposed to companies who have a myopic view of competition and instead of striving for continuous improvement they limit their performance to matching it with their competitors.



Conclusion

As the results indicate, rankings of organizations are demonstrated as follow:

Business / Organizational Traits	Ranking	Compassion Imprint
Embodying Compassion	61%	Slightly Compassionate
Organizational Culture	73%	Moderately Compassionate
Compassion for Individuals	71%	Moderately Compassionate
Empathy	74%	Moderately Compassionate
Awareness	75%	Moderately Compassionate
Action	71%	Moderately Compassionate
Learning	71%	Moderately Compassionate
Communication	70%	Slightly Compassionate
Concern for Everyone	65%	Slightly Compassionate
Knowledge	66%	Slightly Compassionate
Recognition	69%	Slightly Compassionate
Competition	74%	Moderately Compassionate



Based on these trends, a few interesting aspects come to light:

- Organizations rank on the borderline of being slightly compassionate to moderately compassionate in terms of organizational values – the culture promoted by the organization and business culture – the way people choose to do business
- There is a general awareness of terminology however an understanding of what these words signify / embody is still required
- People are aware of organizational values but a complete ownership of these values, an alignment with personal values and implementation of these values is still lacking
- A clear identification and understanding of business stakeholders (who they are, what they mean to an organization) needs to be explored within organizations
- Compassion in workplace, business ethics, CSR – there needs to be a clear understanding at senior management / board level of the importance of these aspects and what they mean to the business – thus ensuring that business strategy of an organization accepts and implements these traits with mind, body, soul
- Pluralism ought to be seen as a strength by not only encouraging diversity but also ensure that negative labeling and stereotyping is discouraged
- Businesses now need to monitor and link compassion to business performance and customer satisfaction
- Seek feedback from vendors and third parties. This is not only in light of compassion but could act as a catalyst for challenging the status quo
- Individual employee engagement surveys need to make way for an external party certifying the level of compassion of an organization.

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Author's Profile

Farhad Karamally is an Organization Development (OD) consultant, management trainer, published author and a habitual entrepreneur. In short he is a catalyst for change. Farhad specializes in unleashing human genius through leadership, creativity and change management initiatives. His energy and passion to excel is contagious and viral that help individuals and their vision to flourish.

Over the past 18 years Farhad has developed many branded training products which can be customized to meet specific requirements of organizations across the private & social sectors of different countries & cultures. He has designed and customized value

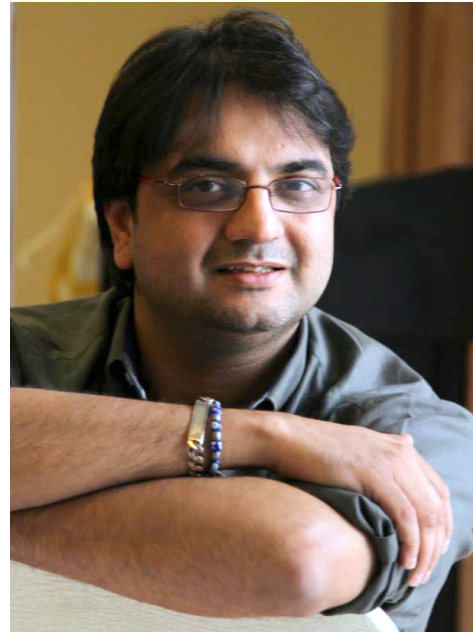
adding interventions for organizations like Reckitt Benckiser, Bayer CropScience & Health, Novartis Consumer Healthcare Pakistan & Middle East Cluster, Procter & Gamble Pakistan & Kazakhstan, Unilever, Nestlé, Coca-Cola, Pepsi Cola International, Shell Pakistan, Barclays Bank, Dubai Quality Group, Al-Batha, Holcim Cement, British American Tobacco, Philip Morris International, UNICEF, World Food Program, Telenor, Orascom, DHL, Merck Pvt. Ltd., Maersk, Standard Chartered Bank, Oracle, Linde Group, 3M, ENI, Pak Suzuki, GIZ & numerous others. As a practitioner of appreciative inquiry to get results, he is renowned for facilitating strategic meetings for senior management and leadership teams.

Farhad is a Founding Professional Member of The International Working Group on Compassionate Organizations.

"Learning is Fun & You Proved It!" remarked Ed Scannel (author of 15 books including 'Games Trainers Play') after experiencing Farhad's session at the Asia HRD Congress –Indonesia.

As an entrepreneur he is Director Navitus Private Ltd (Pakistan and Sri Lanka), Stimulus Private Limited, Tangerine Media, FK Squared, Cre8ech and the most recently, The Bottom Line Holidays Pvt Ltd, Sri Lanka, which all lie under the FNCK Ventures Pvt. Ltd. Umbrella.

Farhad resides in South Asia, alternating his time between Pakistan and Sri Lanka.





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