



Goshen on Leadership

Don't Kill The Cow

I have had the opportunity to do a tremendous amount of business in India, specifically Mumbai. My friend and business associate there owns a very large manufacturing facility which has been established for many years.

He recently picked me up at the airport, giving us about an hour not only to discuss business, but also to talk about life. As I am a Christian and he is a Hindu, our conversation eventually revolved around matters of faith. As we drove, I noticed cows on the street and asked him the question "Isn't it true that your religion believes the cow to be sacred; and therefore, you do not kill it?" He looked at me with a smile and said, "Well there is some spiritual meaning to cows in India, but quite honestly, we value the cow for its dung to hold heat in many huts during the winter, for the milk that it delivers for our young, and for its ability to duplicate by having more cows." I felt somewhat awkward and just began to laugh with him.

What a great analogy to what we are seeing today as many take to the streets to "kill the cow," or in this case, to "kill the companies" that supply the jobs. I do not have my head in the sand regarding some companies that have exercised outside the limits of ethics and some that may have taken advantage of their employees. However, the vast majority of companies in the United States are the "fuel, milk-givers, and reproducers;" they employ millions of folks, give large gifts to colleges and universities, and fund thousands of non-profit organizations. Many of the CEO's and upper management sit on the boards of non-profits, giving hours of free advice on more efficient management of non-profits. They serve on the boards of chambers of commerce, adding value to the people of their communities, and they support their churches or places of worship with their time and money. They fund educational grants, new business grants, and assist thousands of other organizations in need. Many contribute to 401(k)s and pay insurance costs for their employees.

This nation was established under the banner of "free enterprise," allowing everyone the opportunity to fulfill their dreams. Some dream of having others care for them—entitlement, but the majority wishes to take care of themselves—enterprise. We must educate people on the "parable of the cow" while those who wish to see our economy totally collapse seem determined simply to "kill the cow" as they bring ruin to those who support so many.

As leaders, we must work to establish ethics and reasoning skills within our organizations so that people cannot attack our integrity. Great leaders listen to the needs of the people they employ and work to assist in the total development of the employees. Leadership does not set up division but rather collaboration within organizations, and great leaders do not finger-point or blame others; they work with others to accomplish the overall goal.

As we move forward, we as leaders need to be sure our personal cow (business) remains sacred, and that we always put the people we employ ahead of profits and selfish ambitions. Leaders don't "kill the cow."

As a member of the National Speakers Association, Bob has been invited to corporations and organizations to speak on the subjects of Marketing and Leadership. For additional information on Bob Goshen go to www.bobgoshen.com or email bob@bobgoshen.com.

