

Managing Faith in the Workplace 5 June 2008

Organised by The Chartered Management Institute & Three Faiths Forum



Chairman: Trevor Phillips, Chair, Equality and Human Rights Commission did the keynote speech and said that society faces two important questions:

- How do we live with our planet?
- How do we live with each other... in an increasingly diverse society?



Panellists:

- Sir Trevor Chinn CVO, Vice President, Jewish Association of Business Ethics (JABE)
- Ram Gidoomal CBE CCMI, Chair, Winning Communications Partnership Limited
- Mohammed Amin, Tax Partner PWC LLB
- Claire Pedrick, Member the Christian Association of Business Executives (CABE) and director of 3D Coaching Ltd

Sir Trevor Chinn spoke about why he felt it was important to bring faith into work:

- 1) the motivation of the employee – engagement, satisfaction, respect and understanding
- 2) ethical – we are entitled to follow the dictates of our faith if it does not harm others. The practice of our faith is personal
- 3) diversity – we need to reflect society inside and outside work.

Example and enquiry must start at the top of an organisation. Behaviour and how we make decisions not exhortation is what counts.

Mohammed Amin encouraged people to look at the information and resources on the Muslim Council of Britain's website: www.mcb.org.uk/faith particularly about Muslims in the Workplace and Religious Discrimination at Work.

His points included:

- 1) Diversity brings business benefits and avoids group think
- 2) Faith is manageable, we need to be reasonable. Clients don't expect employees to go against God. Contemplation rooms are available in workplaces e.g. PWC where there are also 4 organised religious networks

Claire Pedrick had done a survey on Linked in on the subject of faith and work and commented:

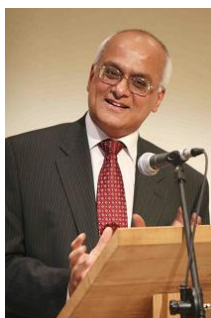


- 1) Faith is there and naturally exists in the workplace. People perform better when they are themselves at work, not when they leave their soul or brain behind. We need to value people's individual stories as this will help organisations perform more effectively.
- 2) People of faith are externally referenced – they have a worldview – it is not just about me, they are part of a community where they feel connection and responsibility. We are not as effective as individuals. Jesus calls us to "Love God and love one another."
- 3) Many people are searching for meaning and purpose. Employers can't create meaning – employees need to do that. Our vocation

is something we need to work at, with our whole heart for God not me. We have a bigger purpose than just doing the job. We approach our job differently when we know we are meant to be there.

She also referenced CAFE's Principles for those in Business (www.principlesforbusiness.com):

- understanding what forgiveness means
- hope in despair, being part of a bigger picture
- working ethically and honestly
- trust
- praying for our workplaces
- serving others
- integrity...



Ram Gidoomal was a Hindu, Sikh, attended a Muslim school and is now a follower of Jesus Christ. He suggested we need to engage with the issue:

- be transparent
- be accountable
- be consistent
- ensure impact is proportionate
- assess risks

To conclude each of the panellists was asked to come up with a key skill which managers and leaders will need in the next five years to manage diversity. These included:

- Listening (really listening so that people 'feel heard')
- Sensitivity to others
- Précis – speaking clearly and simply and then stopping!
- Attitude shifting
- Problem solving

