

Mutiny on the Bounty...it's human nature

One thing about human nature... it never changes. From Adam and Eve to you and me, we're all the same. In a previous *Brief* I identified four key subjects affecting your employee's performance – *what's in it for me, human nature, exchanging time for money, and fatal flaws*. Let's explore human nature a little further.

I was recently reading a fascinating account of Captain Bligh and the famous mutiny aboard the HMS Bounty, which occurred on April 28, 1789. One of the contributors to the article, Mr. Robert Webb, described the atmosphere aboard this way – "Bounty was awash in **competing interests**" and Bligh's management style was "unable to **unite the men in the common cause**", (my emphasis). Looking back, I can't tell you how many corporate situations I have seen that could not be better described than as being awash in "competing interests...and no unity of cause". Achieving truly shared interests and unity of cause among all employees in a business environment is a rare. However, it is a compelling when you experience it.

Most of the theories on human motivation share this common denominator – people are motivated by self-interest. I don't like the sound of that statement but it is probably accurate in most cases, and best expressed in the question "*What's in it for me?*" So, if that is human nature, how do we **align** the self-interest of the organization with the self-interest of the individual? Or as I suspect Mr. Webb would say... how do you eliminate competing interests and UNITE the men (employees) in common cause?

A complete answer would require a book to describe. But for a *Brief*, I am limited to highlights. Aligning corporate performance with employee self-interest requires –

- Clear vision (where are we going)
- Visible and engaged leadership- on the floor, in the trenches
- Specific, company-wide (or facility-wide) tactical goals (3 or 4 maximum)
- Appropriate and effective tools, with resources to achieve the goals
- Accountability
- Constant progress reporting, a "live scoreboard"
- Real time, meaningful, shared rewards for success

Unite the men (and women) in the common cause, is a great leadership rallying cry. We have the tools to help you.

This is not an exhaustive list, but a reasonable start. You must create an environment where emotion exists. There has to be an emotional reaction to winning or losing. If not, then you are simply **exchanging time for money**, and employees are performing well below their potential.