

# Salt News - Spring Edition



Should love be the new normal for values-based businesses?

**Since 1995 I have owned and managed Cloud 9 Care, a company that provides social care to support people to live as independently as possible in their own homes. People are at the core of the business, both staff and clients. - Rachel Van Staveren**

A lot of our work is with people who are approaching the end of their lives and during the pandemic we were often the only human contact that people had.

I've really no idea why I decided to go into this field; with hindsight I can see that God was nudging me in this direction, but at the time, it seemed to be just a business opportunity. During the last two years I have been quite certain that I was right where God wanted me to be.

I have had the great privilege to put into action the words of the hymn "Brother, Sister let me serve you":  
I will hold the Christ-light for you  
In the night time of your fear.  
I will hold my hand out to you;  
Speak the peace you long to hear.

**I've always tried to be a fair and**

**decent employer...**

I want my staff to know they are respected for their commitment to doing a job that is not always very pleasant. I have no doubt that this is driven by my faith; the traditional hierarchical model of management doesn't sit well with me. We work as a team and value and support one another. Jesus always saw into the hearts of people and the raggle-taggle bunch of disciples that he recruited transformed the world. In the same way I try to look for the best in my staff and help them to grow into great carers that can transform the lives of the people they support.

**Valuing staff is not just about paying them well.**

Although that's often the only measure that is used. It's about how you care for them, in the wider sense. We recognize that many of our staff have messy, complicated lives and struggle to cope when unexpected problems crop up. We try to support them by offering flexible hours, running a Christmas savings club and providing small loans to cover emergencies.

I try to listen to my staff and make them feel their opinions matter; they are the ones at the coalface, so I think it's vital to give them a voice. I sit down with every member of my team and listen to what they say and



Rachel Van Staveren and some of her team from Cloud 9 Care.

how they are feeling. Everyone has my number and they can call me at any time – not just about work issues, but anything that worries them. Very rarely do people abuse that.

### **I am part boss, part marriage counsellor, part financial advisor.**

I think the most extreme thing I've volunteered to do is to escort one of my team to HMP Holloway to visit her daughter on remand, but more generally I've written letters to landlords, dealt with bailiffs and paid people's fines. It's quite like parenting! In return I have an amazingly dedicated and committed team – I have 3 staff who will be celebrating 25 years employment with me next year. This is a sector where there is a huge turnover of staff, so I feel blessed to have such a loyal team.

### **I was inspired to commit to paying the Real Living Wage.**

When I became involved with Salt, back before the pandemic, I was inspired to commit to paying the Real Living Wage. It was one of those light-bulb moments when I realized that this was something that I needed to do. Once I'd committed to it I just forged ahead. It needed a little price bump upwards, but nothing exceptional. I was honest with our clients and explained that the price increase was to ensure our staff were properly rewarded. Not one person objected. You can over-think things sometimes; doing the right thing should be the most important business decision on any given day.

### **LOVE YOUR PEOPLE AND THEY WILL LOVE YOU BACK. - Buddy Owen**

I attended a meeting recently where we discussed important aspects of values-based leadership. Those values included honesty, integrity, environmental sustainability, financial transparency, ethical supply chains, and employee wellbeing. I suggested that one of the values could be love. Everyone agreed with the sentiment but thought that love might be out of context in business speak. I disagree.

With the values-based movement, we have the opportunity to create something special. We are all aware that just fiddling with the fringes, or rearranging the furniture, will not make any significant difference and certainly won't reshape the world into a more just, fair, equal, and sustainable place. Radical change is needed to produce radical results.

### **Everyone appreciates a good core value...**

which helps to form the present and aspirational culture of your business. It is also good when those values are verbs, active, doing words. What if the radical change you instilled, no matter your industry, was choosing Love as a core value? What would change for you and your business?

People are your greatest resource, but for too long have been treated as a disposable resource. Love, in business, has been reserved for profit, while people were just a means to that end. What if that equation was reversed? What would it look like for you if the value of Loving People came first? How much would it cost you? How hard would it be to change your current culture? How would it impact your current bottom line?

On the other hand, what would it save you? How would it make everything you do better? How much more would your business be aligned with your personal values? Should there be a difference anyway?

### **Integrity as a value should be implicit in every business.**

You shouldn't have to name it specifically as naming it implies that if it wasn't named, it might not happen. (Core values are words that set you apart, there's no need to state the obvious!) Integrity, according to Google, is, "The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles." If you are a person of integrity, running businesses of integrity, your moral principles

Continued...  
pervade the whole of your life.

Most people would say that they are people who love. They love their families and friends. They want people to believe that they are kind and generous. They may even say that Love is one of their core values outside of work. They even give generously at church or to their local charity. However, if integrity is a virtue that by its nature pervades our whole being, shouldn't that include our work as well?

### **“Love your neighbour as yourself”**

The Bible is full of stories and examples of the need to love and the power that love has to heal. “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Mark 12:31), “Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you...” (Matthew 7:13) and “...Continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.” Whether you are a Christian or not, these words help us to see what the very basics of human interaction should be, whatever the context. So, if you believe in the power of love in one area of your life, should it not be true in all areas?

When we look at the triple bottom line of accounting – People, Planet, Profit – People comes first on purpose. People are your most valuable resource, so how will you show that you love them?

### **In a recent social media post, Simon Sinek shared:**

“100% of employees are people.  
100% of customers are people.  
100% of investors are people.  
If you don't understand people, you don't understand business.”

Every person longs to be loved. If your business can be a place where love is found, perhaps you will find that profit is there, but you're building much more than a business; you're building a sustainable community of like-minded people who together are forging a fairer, more just and equitable society for all. Rather than being skeptical of love as a business term, maybe it should be the first in our list of values? At least that is, until it becomes so normal that listing it no longer makes sense. You know, like integrity?



The way we do business matters at home and abroad. The Salt Network is here to positively impact both.

## **Transforming Business, Transforming Community**

The Salt Network is working towards growing a community of likeminded business leaders committed to being the change we want to see in the world. As a community of action, we come together around three principles:

- 1) Lead Change – In our own businesses: how can we be leaders of the change?
- 2) Provoke a community of change – Amongst our communities: how can we be influencers of the change that needs to be made?
- 3) Resource change – With our finances and skills: how can we resource the change through partnership with Christian Aid?

### **More Than Toil**

The Christian Aid Salt Network is committed to equipping the Church and Christian Business Leaders to put faith into action in the workplace. More than Toil is a five-session discipleship tool for individuals and groups to think actively about their faith and business leadership.

Each session will give you an opportunity to reflect on scripture, review your leadership and explore new ways of operating. You and your work will flourish and you will be inspired to go beyond the bottom line and transform the world for good too. Each session can be run as a small group, larger workshop with external speaker, or as an individual discipleship tool. Below is an excerpt from one of the sessions...

## May we be the paintbrush in the artist hands of God – Mother Teresa

### Business & Society

We live in a world where trillions of dollars in assets, goods and services are traded daily impacting everyone of us around the globe from the wealthiest to the poorest communities and individuals. All our lives are shaped by business and trade whether it is the price of fish in the market; the accessibility of fuel to fill our cars or the trust within financial, political and commercial markets to enable business viability. Business is far from suited executives in fancy city offices; business is and has always been a key part of human interaction and the fabric of society.

## 45 of Jesus' 52 parables are set in the market place.

It is no surprise therefore that 45 of Jesus' 52 parables are set in the market place. Jesus calls his disciples to be active ambassadors of his gospel in everything they do - to be as Salt and light in the market place.

How then, in a sector that impacts so many lives, communities and environments, does God call you to live out your Christian faith within the market place and within the business world?

What does it mean to develop a business that complements the whole of society?

- How can we ensure that we run businesses that produce 'Good' goods and services which benefit those who purchase them?

- How do we foster an environment of 'Good' work that ensures flourishing for our employees and supply chains?

- How do we ensure that the wealth generated is distributed in a fair and equitable manner?

## Three key categories through which you can begin to address these questions:

### Responsible Products and Services

- By producing and delivering products and services that meet human needs and serve the common good

- By taking active steps to reduce social and environmental impact of production and service delivery

- By adapting your business model to help local and global communities thrive

### Decent Work

- Recognise and implement strategies to ensure the dignity of employees and their right to flourish in their work

- Address employment inequality by actively including those from the margins of society within the work force

### Good Wealth & Governance



- Using resources wisely, both to create profit and well-being

- Producing sustainable wealth

- Re-distributing wealth justly, fair and equal wages, honest cost structures for customers & suppliers, transparent tax practices, imbedded social responsibility practises

You can find more from this resource here:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/get-involved/more-toil-everyday-disciples-business-leadership>

## Events and Notices:

Our Partner, FAITH IN BUSINESS, has just announced their Annual Retreat: "God's Investment and Ours" - In Cambridge 20-21 May. Find out more here:

[https://www.faithinbusiness.org/Groups/352039/Faith\\_in\\_Business.aspx](https://www.faithinbusiness.org/Groups/352039/Faith_in_Business.aspx)

### UKRAINE EMERGENCY APPEAL:

We'll be working with partner organisations in the ACT Alliance, a global faith-based coalition, to offer assistance to Ukraine refugees fleeing deadly violence.

So far, two of our ACT partners have distributed 28 tonnes of food supplies and other lifesaving essentials to people on the Ukrainian borders.

Christian Aid was founded in 1945 by British and Irish churches to help refugees after the Second World War. Back then, we worked with partner churches to alleviate suffering by raising the equivalent of £3 million plus in today's money.

We supported, equipped and enabled partner churches in mainland Europe to provide what people needed. Nearly 80 years later, we are doing the same.

Donate here:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/emergencies/ukraine-crisis-appeal>

### PLEDGES:

As you think ahead to the new financial year:

Would you consider making or renewing your Salt Pledge?

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/particle-test/salt-business-network/pledges>

Would you consider contributing financially to the PCIF?

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/fundraising/philanthropic-capital-investment-fund>