



**FAMILY FIRMS AS INCUBATORS FOR SPIRITUALITY IN THE
WORKPLACE: FACTORS THAT NURTURE SPIRITUAL BUSINESSES**

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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes that family firms typically possess specific cultural characteristics that stimulate the development of spirituality in the workplace more than those of non-family firms. We briefly list the trends that have led to a growing appreciation of spirituality in organizations, and provide a description of the characteristics of spiritual businesses. We offer an analysis of the connections between the cultural characteristics of family firms, and the characteristics of spiritual businesses. In the last section we provide the analysis of two different case studies of family firms, the first one as an example of incubator for spirituality in the workplace, and the second one as a clear example of a spiritual business.

INTRODUCTION

This paper proposes that family firms typically possess specific cultural characteristics that stimulate the development of spirituality in the workplace more than those of non-family firms. Spirituality in the workplace is one of the fastest growing areas of interest in the Academy of Management, and it is worthwhile to understand the organizational forms that are more likely to nourish the development of spiritual values and practices in an organization. We recognize that not all family firms have the potential to be supportive of spirituality in the workplace, and in fact some of the darkest and most abusive workplaces may be family firms that are run by a despotic type of leader. However, our interest is in the basic characteristics of the typical family firm, in contrast to non-family firms, and their potential to nourish spirituality in the workplace.

It is also important to state that an organization does not need to be a family firm in order to have an effective approach to spirituality in the workplace. A majority of the 35 organizations that have received the International Spirit at Work Award are not family firms. For example, sixteen of the honorees are not-for-profit organizations and many of those are religious-based hospitals. On the other hand, thirteen of the honorees are individually-owned or family-owned organizations. (See Appendix A for the full list of organizations that have received the award).

In this paper, we briefly list the trends that have led to a growing appreciation of spirituality in organizations and provide a description of the characteristics of spiritual businesses. We offer an analysis of the connections between the cultural characteristics of family firms, and the characteristics of spiritual businesses. In the last section we provide the analysis of two different case studies of family firms, the first one as an example of

incubator for spirituality in the workplace, and the second one as a clear example of a spiritual business.

Evidence of Spirituality in the Workplace as a Trend

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was evidence that a new trend in management was beginning to emerge. Management theorists (c.f. Boldt, 1991; Conger, 1994, Dehler and Welsh, 1994; Fox, 1994; Harman and Hormann, 1990; Kurth, 1994; Pierce, 1992, Vaill, 1990; Wheatley, 1992), practitioners (c.f. Autry, 1991; Barrentine, 1993; Bellman, 1990; Chappell, 1993; DePree, 1989; George, 1993; Hawley, 1993; Roddick, 1992; Ziegler, Ziegler and Rosenweig, 1992) and business journalists (c.f. Brandt, 1992; Emke, 1987; Iwata, 1993, Laabs, 1995; Lee and Zemke 1993; Rose 1990, Sherman, 1994; Stewart, 1991) were beginning to explore the idea that spirituality was an important variable in management and organizational effectiveness. A major turning point was when Business Week published an article on spirituality and business (Galen 1995). Within a very short period of time there was a very large proliferation of articles and books on the topic.¹

This has been an international phenomenon, as evidenced by authors from countries such as India (Chakraborty, 1991; Chatterjee, 1998), Australia (Cochrane 1999), Canada (Pauchant, 2000; Secretan, 1996), the United Kingdom (Harpham, 2000; Nelson, 1996) and Japan (Low, 1976; Matsushita, 1994). In an international survey of over 2000 people, White and Renesch (1992) found that the majority of research participants had strong values regarding spirituality in the workplace.

Defining Spirituality in the Workplace

In order to understand what we mean by “spirituality in the workplace,” it helps to clarify that we draw a distinction between the related concepts of spirituality and religion. Religion is institutionalized spirituality and is usually associated with dogma, prescribed behaviors, and shared rituals. Spirituality is the individualized experience of meaning, purpose, and connection to something greater than oneself. (Hawley, 1993) Wedemeyer and Jue (2002) make the following distinction:

Religion represents organized vehicles or practices that translate a specific set of spiritual beliefs or doctrines, often involving adherence to dogma and a hierarchical organizational structure. The word spirituality is less focused on forms, practices, or personages, but embodies the idea of spirit or soul—the essential part of a person that transcends physical limitations. Spirituality tends to focus more on the discovery of personal truth as opposed to taught truth.

(Wedemeyer and Jue, 2002: 10)

Many people are concerned that “spirituality in the workplace” is equated to “religion in the workplace.” The underlying fear is that someone in management may try to change an employee’s religious or spiritual beliefs, or may discriminate against an employee who does not share a particular faith tradition. However, at least in the United States, EEO laws prevent unwanted religious proselytizing and prohibit discrimination based on religion (Frierson, 1988; Cash & Gray, 2000). Two surveys on spirituality in the workplace both found that people think spirituality in the workplace will lead to positive organizational benefits as long as there is no proselytizing (Mitroff and Denton, 1999; Schaefer and Darling, 1997).

¹ A comprehensive spirituality in the workplace bibliography can be found on the International Center for Spirit at Work website; www.spiritatwork.org. An actual count of the number of articles and books published in each decade are found later in this paper.

We agree with Wedemeyer and Jue (2002: 10) when they state; “We respect existing religious traditions, acknowledging the insights and influence of belief systems throughout history. From our own personal experiences, we recognize the benefits that can come from participation in an organized religious community.” At the same time, any efforts to create a more spiritual business must respect that people in the workplace may be uncomfortable or even fearful of explicit expressions of religious faith in the workplace. And it is important to respect the diversity of belief systems, including respect for those who do not feel aligned with any spiritual or faith tradition. (See also Bruce 2000: 461-464 for further discussion of spirituality and religion in workplaces).

Workplace spirituality is a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promote employees’ experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). Our definition of spirituality in the workplace for purposes of this paper comes from the research of Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2004), who conducted a thorough literature review and followed that with a qualitative study of individuals’ definitions and experiences with spirituality in the workplace. Their goal was to create a definition that could be operationalized and support the development of future research.

Spirit at work is a distinct state that is characterized by physical, affective, cognitive, interpersonal, and mystical dimensions. Most individuals describe the experience as including: a *physical* sensation characterized by a positive state of arousal or energy; positive *affect* characterized by a profound feeling of well-being and joy; *cognitive* features involving a sense of being authentic, an awareness of alignment between one’s values and beliefs and one’s work, and a belief that one is engaged in meaningful work that has a higher purpose; an *interpersonal* dimension characterized by a sense of connection to others and common purpose; a *spiritual* presence characterized by a sense of connection to something larger than

self, such as a higher power, the Universe, nature or humanity; and a *mystical* dimension characterized by a sense of perfection, transcendence, living in the moment, and experiences that were awe-inspiring, mysterious, or sacred.

(Kinjerski and Skrypnek, 2004: 37)

Literature on cultural advantages of family firms

Despite the fact that it is not easy to find specific references about organizational culture of family businesses in the literature, most of their strong points or advantages as compared to non-family firms has cultural nature. We propose that these cultural advantages are all significant contributors to increasing spirituality in the workplace.

Organizational Culture continues to be an important topic of discussion, both for managers and for researchers (Linstead and Grafton-Small, 1992; Von Rosenthal *et al.*, 1995; De Witte and Van Muijen, 1999; Ogbonna and Harris, 2002).

In this respect, Schein (1996) argues that the culture is one of the most powerful and stable forces operating in organizations. The culture is assumed to influence the firm's financial performance (Denison, 1984), its internal development (Cox *et al.*, 1991) and its strategic success (Bluedorn and Lundgren, 1993).

The different paradigmatic proposals from which organizational culture has been studied can be roughly divided into two broad groups: utilitarian and semasiological (or interpretive).

Utilitarian approaches would include all those that generally consider organizational culture as a tool, a variable, and consequently manipulable, by means of which an organization's members attempt to meet their needs, at the same time as it

provides them with a context in which to maintain relationships among themselves and with their environment.

In contrast, semasiological or interpretive approaches would include all those proposals treating the study of culture as a system of meaning creation and interpretation of reality, embodied in a series of beliefs, symbols and external manifestations.

Martin's (1992) proposal deserves to be highlighted, since none of the approaches proposed by this author for the study of culture is incompatible with utilitarian or interpretive proposals. Indeed, it represents a holistic approach to organizational culture and consequently addresses it from the ideal level. In table 1, we briefly outline the different proposals concerning organizational culture found in the literature and advanced from the two above-mentioned positions.

Insert Table 1 about here

The primary goal of this paper is to analyze to what extent family firms possess certain cultural advantages that stimulate the development of spirituality in the workplace more than those of non-family firms. That's the reason why we can frame the current research work within what we have labeled the 'semasiological' or 'meaning creation' approach to study the organizational culture.

In order to describe the process we have followed to accomplish this main objective and with a view to facilitating understanding, we have structured the paper in the following two sections.

In the next section, we will briefly list the trends that have led to a growing appreciation of spirituality in organizations and we will briefly describe the characteristics of spiritual businesses and the cultural advantages of family firms as

compared to non-family firms. This section will conclude with our analysis of the connections between these cultural advantages and the characteristics of spiritual businesses. We will delineate the similarities, laying the groundwork for our thesis that family businesses are an excellent incubator for spirituality in the workplace. Finally, in the last section we will provide the analysis of two different case studies of family firms, the first one as an example of incubator for spirituality in the workplace, and the second one as a clear example of a spiritual business.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Concepts and characteristics of spiritual businesses

There are several major trends that have led to the increasing interest in spirituality in the workplace. Neal (2005: 271) describes the following five trends in her overview article on spirituality in the workplace: (1) The changing psychological contract for work which began to change in the 1980's, (2) Changing demographics and aging of the workforce, which started to become an issue in the 1990's, (3) The Millennium Effect which was a result of a collective reflection among many people about the history and the future of humanity as we approached the year 2000, (4) Increased interest in self-help groups and personal growth, which has grown since the 1960's; and (5) the more recent impact of September 11, 2001 and terrorism.

Similarly Howard & Welbourne (2004: 11) list the more recent trends as having an impact on the growing interest of spirituality in the workplace:

- technological advances and their limitations

- stakeholder capitalism and corporate social responsibility
- feminism and the green/environmental movements;
- recent financial scandals leading to concern about business ethics;
- September 11th;
- the oil price hike, triumphant capitalism and globalization

Before the 1980s, there was relatively little mention in the literature of spirituality in the workplace. A review of the 47-page Spirit at Work Bibliography compiled by the International Center for Spirit at Work found 2 references in the 1960s, 8 references in the 1970s, and 40 references in the 1980s. Most of the early references in this field are focused on religion and the workplace. In the 1990s, there are 522 references listed, and 134 for 2000-2006.

Given that there are many forces that are encouraging the emergence of spirituality in the workplace, what are the characteristics of organizations that openly choose to integrate spirituality and work? We call these “spiritual businesses” and define spiritual businesses as “Organizations that are committed to operating on spiritual values and that have explicit practices or processes to nurture the human spirit.” For purposes of this paper, we are focusing primarily on for-profit organizations when we discuss “spiritual businesses,” but it is important to note that there are also examples of spiritual practices and values in almost all forms of organizations, including non-profit organizations, educational institutions, healthcare, the military and government organizations. Although there is no one source or listing of organizations that could be described as spiritual businesses, there are a growing number of publications that profile these organizations.

The characteristics that we describe come from three sources; a review of the literature, personal visits to organizations, and the profiles of the organizations that have been honored with the International Spirit at Work Award (www.spiritatwork.org). Following is a brief overview of major sources from the literature.

There are two types of literature that profiles spiritual businesses; individual case studies written by CEOs (cf. Chappell, 2003; Roddick, 1992; George, 1993; Stephen, 2002; and Catell, Moore & Rifkin, 2004) and research-based collections of case studies (Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Gunther 2004; Marcic, 1997; Osterberg, 1993; Liebig, 1994; Lamont, 2002; and Lewin and Regine, 2000). In addition to the companies profiled in the literature, thirty-five organizations from eleven countries have received the International Spirit at Work Award since 2002. In order to receive this award, the organization must have 65 or more employees, be in business for at least five years, and have explicit spiritual practices, programs or policies (www.spiritatwork.org) (Aburdene, 2005; Kollura, 2005).

Based on our reviews of these profiles and our own experience with spiritual organizations, we have determined that there are two categories of spiritual business characteristics; external characteristics and internal characteristics.

External characteristics are the practices, processes and methods that the organization uses to interact with its external environment based on spiritual values. Internal characteristics are the policies, procedures, and practices that are used to interact with employees and other internal stakeholders with the goal of creating a spiritually nurturing workplace. Not all spiritual businesses will have all of these external and internal characteristics. However, we make the proposition that if an organization has the

majority of these characteristics that they are likely to be a spiritual business. There is no definitive way of deciding whether or not an organization is a spiritual business, just as there is no way to clearly state that a particular organization is an ethical business.

However, we think these characteristics serve as reasonable guidelines.

External characteristics of a spiritual business include:

- Strong commitment to social responsibility (Aburdene, 2005; Roddick, 1992; Osterberg, 1993; Liebig, 1994).
- Employees and management actively involved in the community, especially in charitable activities (Aburdene, 2005; Chappell, 2003; Roddick, 1992; George, 1993; Gunther, 2004).
- Aesthetically pleasing and spiritually nurturing buildings and grounds (Jones, 1995; Jones 2006; Lamont, 2002; Richards 1995; Neal, 2006).
- Communication of spiritual values in its relationships with customers and vendors (Catell, Moore & Rifkin, 2004; George, 1993; Lamont, 2002; Roddick, 1992; Stephen, 2002; and Catell, Moore & Rifkin, 2004; Lamont, 2002).
- Use of spiritual imagery and terms in marketing and public relations (Aburdene, 2005; Chappell, 1992).
- Active involvement in the spirituality in the workplace movement (Aburdene, 2005; Kollura, 2005).

Internal characteristics of a spiritual business include:

- Employees feel that their work is their calling; an opportunity to grow and make a difference, and contributing to something that matters. (Finney and Dasch, 1998;

Levoy, 1997; Wedemeyer and Jue, 2002; Fox, 1994; Moxley, 2000; Ray, 2004; Hogan, 2000; Boldt, 1991; Howard & Welbourne, 2004; Neal, 2006)

- Leaders are enlightened and compassionate and have a commitment to their own spiritual values and practices. (Moxley, 2000; Wheatley, 1992; Autry, 1991; Chatterjee, 1998; Conger, 1994; DePree, 1989; George, 2003; Liebig, 1994; Stephen, 2002; Gunther, 2004; Howard & Welbourne, 2004; Neal, 2006)
- Teams are spirited, passionate and committed. (Heermann, 1997; Levine, 1994; Nirenberg, 1995; Moxley, 2000; Gunther, 2004)
- The organization is focused on virtues and is values-driven. (Parboteeah & Cullen, 2003; Gibbons, 2000; Barrett, 1998; Marcic, 1997; Chakraborty, 1991; Manz, Manz, Marx, & Neck, 2001; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Liebig, 1994; Cameron, Dutton & Quinn, 2003; Manz, Cameron, Manz & Marx, 2006)
- The organization is willing to hold itself accountable for its values as well as for the bottom-line. (Gibbons, 2000; Hogan, 2000; Renesch and DeFoore, 1996; Howard & Welbourne, 2004; Fox, 1994; Gunther, 2004; Barrett, 1998)
- The organization is creative, flexible, and adaptive. (Jones, 1995, 2005; Barrett, 1998; Osterberg, 1993; Neal, 2006)
- There is a sense of family and community. (Hogan, 2000; Mitroff & Denton, 1999)
- Strong commitment to being of service to each other, to customers, and to the world. (Kurth, 1994; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Gunther, 2004; Frick, 2004; Neal, 2000, 2006)

- Long-term orientation; willingness to make business decisions based on the common good rather than a short-term emphasis on maximizing profit. (Kurth, 1994; Fox, 1994; Osterberg, 1993; Liebig, 1994; Zohar & Marshall, 2004)

Since the primary focus of this paper is on the *culture* of family firms (i.e. internal characteristics), we shall center our analysis on the internal characteristics of spiritual businesses. In Table 2 we briefly summarize these and their authors.

Insert Table 2 about here

We will now briefly describe each of these nine internal characteristics of spiritual businesses, in order to lay the groundwork for an examination of the link between the advantages of family firms and these nine variables.

- *Work is a calling.*

In a spiritual business, employees are passionate about their work, because they are encouraged to express their gifts and to be their authentic selves. (Moxley, 2000; Jones, 2005) People are not put into pre-determined slots. Instead, employees are asked to find the unique way that they can contribute to the organization while also contributing to their sense of purpose and meaning in their lives. (Finney & Dasch, 1998; Levoy, 1997) The organization provides a sense of purpose and meaning by offering services and or products that make a positive difference in the world. (Aburdene, 2005; Liebig, 1994, Neal, 2006).

- *Enlightened leaders.*

Spirituality in business begins with the personal spirituality of the leaders of the organization. (Conger, 1994; Moxley 2000). They are aware of their core spiritual

values, and they can communicate them simply and clearly, while also tapping into the highest motivations of followers. While having a strong personal commitment to their own spiritual path, enlightened leaders never put pressure on anyone to follow the same path. (Stephen, 2002; George, 2003) However, they are adamant about the organization adhering to the core values; spiritual values such as honesty, integrity, authenticity, respect for differences, caring, and compassion. (DePree, 1989; Liebig, 1994; Chatterjee, 1998) They create managerial processes that support these values. These processes can include the selection and hiring processes, management team development, rewards and recognition, and even employee termination processes. (Wheatley, 1992; Gunther, 2004; Howard & Welbourne, 2004) People who work for enlightened leaders feel truly seen and cared for. They also feel inspired by their leaders, and respect them for walking the talk. (Neal, 2006)

- *Spirited teams.*

Spiritual businesses put a special emphasis on team building that goes beyond the traditional corporate team-building training sessions. They understand the power of a highly cohesive group, where people know and trust each other, and truly care for one another. Teams in spiritual businesses frequently use words like “love” to describe how they feel about each other and the team. (Autry 1991). A team like this is capable of great creativity, as well as tremendous passion for and commitment to the organization’s goals. (Heermann 1997; Moxley 2000). In order to have spirited teams, the organization must be willing to let the teams stay relatively intact over long periods of time, so that team members really get to know one another as integral human beings (body, mind, emotion and spirit), not just as fellow employees. (Levine 1994)

Teams often take on a shared spiritual practice such as beginning meetings with a moment of silence, participating in shared meditation, or discussing spiritual topics and their application to work. (Aburdene 2005, Nirenberg 1995, Gunther 2004)

- *Virtues and values-driven.*

This is probably the most important variable in defining a spiritual business. A spiritual business sees spiritual values as being just as important as economic values. (Parboteeah and Cullen 2003, Barrett 1998) Rather than seeing itself as an economic machine, created for the purpose of providing profits to its owners, it sees itself as a living system that is co-created by its leaders, employees, customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders. (Gibbons 2000) The organization becomes a place where human beings can develop and practice virtues such as courage, humility, trustworthiness, kindness, and even love. (Marcic 1997; Manz, Cameron, Manz & Marx 2006; Manz, Manz, Marx, & Neck 2001)

There is a clear set of shared values which are usually initially defined by the leaders, but through a process of dialogue and participation, the values get co-created and redefined with input from all the organization's members. (Barrett 1998, Liebig 1994) People buy into the values and work hard to live in alignment with them. When difficult decisions must be made, the organization always revisits its values for guidance. (Cameron, Dutton & Quinn 2003, Chakraborty 1991, Mitroff & Denton 1999)

Parboteeah and Cullen (2003) propose that there are theoretical links between ethical climates and workplace spirituality. They summarize their analysis of different types of ethical cultures to conclude that:

...the benevolent-local and principled-local ethical climate types are the most conducive to foster the development of workplace spirituality. In contrast, an egoistic ethical climate, because of its emphasis on gains at the expense of other individuals or social entities, seems to be the least desirable climate for the development of workplace spirituality.

Parboteeah and Cullen 2003: 149

- *Accountability for values.*

It is not just enough to have a list of values on a card or on posters around the organization, the values must truly be lived. (Renesch and DeFoore 1996; Howard & Welbourne 2004) In order to support this values integration throughout the business, spiritual organizations hold themselves accountable through some kind of quantitative or qualitative measurement system. Just as they measure sales, productivity and profits, they also measure how well they are living their virtues and values. They may use tools like Barrett's (1998) Values Audit, or may create their own "balanced scorecard" (Kaplan and Norton, 1996). If they find that they are not living their values as much as they would like, they take action to move more into alignment with what matters most to them. Gibbons (2000), Hogan (2000), Fox (1994), Gunther (2004), Barrett (1998)

- *Creative, flexible, and adaptive.*

In many large, highly bureaucratic organizations, employees feel as if the rules and procedures strangle all the life out of them. It is as if they are asked to check their brains and hearts in at the door. On the other hand, spiritual businesses tend to be more organic and less rule-driven. (Neal 2006) They prefer to allow the space and freedom for natural human creativity to emerge. They are not focused on control. These kinds of businesses also value intuition and they trust peoples' hunches. If someone has a sense that there is

an emerging threat or opportunity, they are given free rein to take action without having to go through the creation of detailed proposals and countless meetings. (Osterberg 1993)

It is possible that some people in the organization may feel a connection with the Transcendent, and may feel guided by something that is of greater wisdom. So the organization becomes more nimble. (Jones 1995, 2005) Organizations that encourage the spiritual development of employees tend to find that employees are less resistant to change, and are much better able to adapt to organizational and environmental changes. (Neal, 2006, Barrett 1998)

- *Sense of family and community.*

Families and communities are based on love, trust, and a sense of shared destiny. Spiritual businesses often describe themselves as “a family” or a “community.” People relate to each other in a personal way that goes beyond just the task at hand. People care about one another, and usually know something about each others’ families and personal lives. (Kurth 1994) There are emotional bonds between individuals as well as an emotional attachment to the organization. (Mitroff & Denton 1999) Because employees know each other well, there is a greater sense of trust. This trust means that the organization has less of a need for strict control mechanisms, and more energy is available for productive work. (Gibb 1978, Hogan 2000) It also means that people are more likely to use discretionary time and energy to support the goals of the organization, because they feel intimately connected.

Parboteeah and Cullen (2003) advise companies that wish to encourage workplace spirituality to “promote a sense of fellowship and community at work.” (149)

- *Focus on service.*

If you look at the wisdom of all the major spiritual traditions, you will see that being of service is a common theme (Greenleaf, 1977; Fox 1994; Marcic 1997; Heermann 1997; Manz, Manz, Marx, and Neck 2001). From a spiritual perspective, we all have a spark of the Divine in us. We are all children of God, Allah, the Oneness, the Great Creator, or whatever words you want to use for the Transcendent. One way to worship or to be connected to the Transcendent is to be of service to others, since we are all interconnected. (Mitroff & Denton 1999) Work provides constant opportunities to be of service to others; service to fellow employees, service to customers, and service to the world. (Neal 2000, 2006) Humans experience a sense of meaning and purpose when we can be of service. A spiritual business has a culture that values service very highly. There is a strong customer orientation, but there is also a sense of being of service to something much greater than oneself. (Kurth 1994; Mitroff & Denton 1999; Gunther 2004, Frick 2004)

- *Long-term orientation*

Spiritual businesses challenge the prevailing business paradigm that emphasizes increasing quarterly returns for the shareholders. They see themselves as part of a much bigger picture, and have a commitment to long-term sustainability. (Kurth 1994; Fox (1994) The sustainability is not only for the organization, but for humanity and for the planet. (Osterberg 1993; Liebig (1994) They often adopt the Native American “seventh generation” approach to decision-making. In other words, when making major decisions,

they will ask themselves, “How will this impact our children seven generations from now?” Profits serve human beings, rather than human beings existing for the purpose of creating profits. So they will often make decisions that may appear to not be of the best interests of the organization in the short term. But, because of their commitment to their core values, and their long-term orientation, they are willing to take risks and to do things that may seem counter-intuitive to traditional organizations. (Aburdene, 2005; Zohar & Marshall 2004)

We have reviewed the nine internal characteristics of Spiritual Businesses, based on our definition and our review of the literature. Now we will describe the characteristics of healthy family firms.

Concepts and cultural advantages of family firms

To find some reference in the literature to specific characteristics of family firm culture, we need to resort to the different taxonomies of organizational culture. These taxonomies are indeed characterized by the variety of the parameters and classificatory elements used. We might mention as the most significant typologies those of Harrison (1972), Deal and Kennedy (1982), Ansoff (1985), Sethia and Von Glinow (1985), Handy (1986a,b), Blunt (1991) and Ogbonna and Harris (2000).

Of all these cultural typologies, two point to family firms as the most representative example of one of their cultural archetypes. Specifically, we are referring, first, to the “power” or “Zeus” archetype from Handy’s (1986a,b) taxonomy, based on the personalities of the Greek gods; and second, to Ogbonna and Harris’s (2000)

“community”, based on Deshpande *et al.*'s (1993) cultural archetype of the Japanese “clan” and the comparison of the family firm’s culture with that of the Japanese business clans made by Davis (1990; cited in Leach, 1993, p29).

Analysis of the characteristics of the culture of the firms included in these archetypes leads us to reflect and offer a first suggestion of some of the features that may potentially determine the specific nature of the culture of family firms. We are referring to characteristics such as:

- Existence of a visible power structure and of a charismatic authority that influences and envelops the organization.
- Absence of norms and rules and operation based on empathy between individuals.
- They are proud, strong and ideal for responding to external threats and keeping a close watch on competitors.
- High level of commitment, loyalty and tradition.
- The firm is regarded as a big family.
- Strongly person-oriented, provoking high levels of cohesion and morale.
- The managers behave as mentors, very paternalistically.

Analyzing the specific family firm literature, it is striking that many of the cultural characteristics mentioned above are signaled as or advantages of family compared to non-family firms. That is the reason why we can consider them as “cultural advantages” of family firms. In Table 3 we briefly outline the most significant of these and their authors.

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 Insert Table 3 about here

In view of the positive influence that they may have on the development of spirituality in the workplace, we will now briefly describe each of these eight advantages.

- *Knowledge of business and experience*

Family firms often have their own way of doing things, and a store of knowledge based on the experience accumulated by past generations who have run the business – something their competitors lack. We are referring to practical knowledge that in normal market conditions would spread rapidly, but that can be kept secret in the heart of a family. Knowledge and experience, in turn, can be a decisive factor in the creation of unique products, which are clearly differentiated and highly valued by the market. The family tradition is unequivocally a value added in these cases.

This idea of knowledge is also important with regards the entry of succeeding generations into the firm, since these have been brought up listening to strategies thought out for the firm, and imbued with their parents' enthusiasm, so that when the time comes for them to join the business they will already have acquired a very deep knowledge about it almost without realizing. Thus, the trade, the know-how is transmitted from parents to children to grandchildren, etc., until a family tradition is created that reinforces this know-how even more.

- *Long-term orientation*

In general, family firms tend to take a more long-term view of their own business – i.e., it is not regarded as a short-term venture. The fact that the families tend to have a clear view of their commercial objectives for the next 10 or 15 years represents a considerable advantage.

Davis (1990; cited in Leach, 1993, p29) points out:

...[I]f there is one institution in the Western economy that can be compared with the philosophy that the Japanese have introduced in the business world in the past 15 years, that is the family firm. Neither the shrewdest capitalist nor the co-operative society can compare, because they are more concerned with their

quarterly or half-yearly profits. We can also detect the long-term orientation of the family firm both in its investment policy and in its allocation of the profits generated. The conception of the family business as a legacy that must be preserved and extended before handing it over to the following generation leads to a meticulous and exhaustive selection of which investments to make, with no risks being taken unless they are strictly necessary. In addition, the profit allocation policy tends to be extremely conservative and austere, with an almost generalized tendency to reinvest the profits in the firm. The family firm is the only type of firm that can really embark on long-term projects.

It is precisely this tendency to reinvest the profits that makes family firms more adaptable in times of crisis.

- *Commitment, dedication and family pride*

In family firms the existence of high levels of organizational commitment may find its origin in the very existence of a family business tradition marked by continuing success. Thus, the fact that more than one family generation has dedicated itself to producing a good or providing a service continually and successfully is a source of pride and satisfaction among its members. This feeling of pride may spark a real passion for the firm in the family members. The firm becomes the center of their lives and they nurture it and encourage it to evolve. This profound link translates naturally into dedication and commitment, which spreads to all the family members who make some contribution to the firm's success. They feel that they have a family responsibility in common and as long as there are no conflicts they are ready to dedicate much more time and energy to their work than they would do in a normal job, there being no consideration of either times or number of hours. And these feelings and attitudes do not remain in the family, but gradually spread to the remaining members of the firm's workforce, who in turn make increasing efforts, since they feel part of the same team, seeking common objectives and benefits for all.

- *Loyalty, trust and communication*

We often find family firms in which the melting pot of family relationships is founded on trust, which in turn promotes communication and generates loyalties. In addition, this melting pot tends to pervade the ownership and labor relations too. In this way many family firms become much more humane places to work than the stereotypical bureaucratic organizations. There is great concern in this type of firm for the needs of the employees as individuals. The family business behaves as one big family, caring for its own and this makes its employees feel part of the family. This logically generates a working atmosphere based on trust and communication, which leads to unity and generates loyalty towards the firm among all its members.

This working atmosphere equips the family firm with solid structures that are generally more reliable, and the market perceives them as such. Many buyers prefer to do business with a firm that has a long history, and they tend to appreciate relationships with management and staff where there is not constant turnover.

- *Flexibility and speed of decision-making*

The organizational structures of family firms often display characteristics that are traditionally indicative of a greater flexibility. Thus, they are less hierarchical and bureaucratic, which in turn leads to a greater speed in the decision-making process. This flexibility allows this type of firm to respond quickly and effectively to the frequent and increasingly rapid changes that occur in the environment, whether for of a social, economic or technological nature. In addition, the day-to-day operations are carried out in a less formal way in family firms. The fact that the decision-making process is relatively un-formalized is a result of the high degree of mutual familiarity of family

members, who have grown up together. This equips the business with tremendous communicative agility and efficiency in the management.

In family firms the business priorities and the need for change dominate the decision-making process – which in the light of the above we can regard as flexible – hence making it faster and more opportunistic. This flexibility and speed of decision-making is also reinforced when the family firm has an atmosphere like that described in the previous section, characterized by the existence of solid trust, communication and mutual loyalty among its members. This allows information to flow rapidly, and individuals to have full confidence in and respect for the decisions adopted, even when the results do not prove as satisfactory as expected.

- *Beliefs, values and shared vision*

Deeply-rooted values and beliefs are converted into the main support of the family unit, allowing the family firm to enjoy an unequivocal identity and a strong sense of success in the mission it has set itself. This leads these firms to concentrate their efforts on what they do best – in so doing developing competences that are difficult to beat. Likewise, this identity and shared mission will determine a clear and well-defined style of behavior, both within the family business and outside it – i.e., the behavior towards the group of individuals employed in the family firm, regardless of whether they belong to the owning family or not, and also towards the friends of the family, customers, suppliers, and so forth. In this respect, the behavioral homogeneity and unanimity firmly contribute to consolidating and increasing personal and business prestige in parallel. This, in turn, serves to reaffirm the values and the shared mission of those that behave in this way.

Thus, a very virtuous and self-strengthening circle is created, which makes these family firms extremely invulnerable in terms of competitiveness.

- *Excellent customer service and concern for quality*

A clear awareness that the customer comes first as well as a friendly and personalized treatment, suited to the specific needs of each customer, have always been priorities among the managers of family firms, as well as one of their most obvious competitive advantages. Family firms have long been oriented to a particular kind of consumer and their specific needs – i.e., they have concentrated most of their resources and efforts on small market segments or niches in which they have become real specialists. This idea of serving the customers in the best possible way, even going to the extreme of pampering them if necessary, has produced an acute awareness in these firms of the importance that product quality has for customer satisfaction. Hence they strive to manufacture and sell products of the highest quality.

Nowadays, “total quality” management is fashionable among multinational companies. However, it is no coincidence that many of the important firms cited as leaders of the total quality crusade are family firms. After all, the family surname is on the door or building, it is very visible, the community generally knows who is behind this or that product. The commercial name of many family firms is an unquestionable synonym of quality and indeed it has been for generations. Quality is generally regarded as an important competitive advantage, whose main effect is to allow the firm to earn the best possible return from its investment.

- *Autonomy of action and finances*

This particular advantage of family firms has its *raison d'être* in another that we have already mentioned and have termed “long-term orientation.” Family firms, in their desire to maintain and conserve the family legacy that is the business in the hands of future generations, focus an important financial strategy that is highly valued by the institutions making up the financial system of the economy. These institutions generally regard family firms as solvent and hence reliable companies. Conscious that independence depends on controlling the ownership of the firm’s capital, family firms attempt to maintain control in the hands of family members, either denying participation or perhaps allowing just minimum, unrepresentative stockholdings to people outside the family.

Dual control over the ownership and the management of the firm provides family businesses with a substantial autonomy. At the same time it frees them from the problems that the disparity of objectives between managers and owners cause when control is clearly separated.

Moreover, the fact that many of these companies are not listed on the stock exchange makes them financially independent, by limiting outsiders’ access to their stocks, and at the same time removing the pressures that listing entails. From the financial perspective, there is no possibility of outsiders launching a takeover bid, and hence no need for the firms to prepare defense mechanisms against them. From the information point of view, the business is not obliged to divulge as much information. Therefore competitors find it more difficult to identify the family firm’s future plans. This can represent a competitive advantage.

Links between the cultural advantages of family firm and spirituality at work

To finish this section and after having described these inner characteristics of spiritual businesses and the cultural advantages of family firms, we will now examine the similarities with the cultural advantages of family firms. Table 4 shows the overlaps and comparisons.

Insert Table 4 about here

Analyzing this table, the most important conclusion is that there is really an extraordinary connection between the characteristics of spiritual businesses and the cultural features pointed out by the literature as advantages for family firms. Interestingly enough, while there is no direct correlation between the “Autonomy of action and finances” variable in family firms, this characteristic is one of the most important reasons why family firms are potential incubators for spiritual businesses. The reasons for this are:

- The founder and leaders have more freedom to be values-driven
- The family firm is not responsible for quarterly returns to shareholders, so it can focus on the long-term, which allows it to be more spiritually nurturing
- The leaders of the firm are able to implement explicitly spiritual practices and activities without the constraint of Wall Street analysts, and other external control factors.

CASE STUDIES

This theoretical background above allows us to think, a priori, that family firms are good incubators for spirituality at work place. In this section we will provide the analysis of two different cases of family firms. The first one, the Spanish family firm “CIM group” is a clear example of the specific cultural characteristics that give them the

potential for being excellent incubators for creating the characteristics of a spirituality business. The second one, the Canadian Holding O.C.B, is a significant case of how a family business becomes a spiritual firm. For the purposes of the current work, we define a family firm as; “A firm in which the members of a single family have a sufficient stockholding to dominate the decisions taken by the owners’ representative body, whether this has a formal or legal character or in contrast is informal, and in which moreover there is a desire or intention to maintain the business in the hands of the following family generation.”

Neither firm is a pure example of a family firm that is also a spiritual business. However, it is our intent to show what we believe is a natural linkage between these two forms of business.

Case study 1: Holding Group CIM, Spain

The information in this section comes from the following sources: six in depth interviews, three of them with the management team (the founder, the CEO and a non family manager) and the other three with different non family blue collar workers; the company’s websites and attendance at numerous presentations given by the CEO.

Family business group

In the late 1950s, after a period in Barcelona where he was employed as a driller, digging mines and wells, Miguel Pérez Luque set up his own business in Martos (Spain), his home town. It was a construction firm, which he called "Mipelsa" and which was mainly devoted to public works. At first, it consisted of a four-employee team and a few machines. However, he soon combined it with the development of an alternative line of

trade: buying and selling land plots. He would buy large properties all over the province of Jaén (even in other provinces), divide them into small plots and sell them to small landowners on easy payment terms.

Mr. Miguel Pérez is very charismatic, a born public relations man, who has held different local administration offices, developed many social and political activities. Above all, he is a skilled businessman. These abilities have allowed him to build up a flourishing firm which, only in the area of construction, currently turns over around 18 million euros. Another striking aspect about this businessman is his ability to share his ideas with people around him. Thus, he has been able to transmit the fundamental values of his firm and his flair for business to his family. In fact, five of his sons have joined the firm since 1982, except one daughter, who lives in the United States. In 1984, Mr. Pérez and his elder son, Miguel Ángel, a graduate in Chemistry and presently General Manager, started to run the firm together. Although Mr. Pérez retired in 1995, he is still the chairman of the company. Miguel Ángel has reduced his duties in the firm and informed his brothers of his intention to resign from his post at the age of 55, thus allowing younger members of the family to increase their responsibility in the firm, even though he would still remain involved in its management.

The consolidation of the firm has been allowed by the incorporation of the family's second generation. In 1991, an equitable division of the property was made between the sons (and daughter). At present, part of the family assets is grouped in a portfolio company, "Grupo CIM", made up of three companies employing 170 people approximately: "Tuccsa", which manufactures chipboards; "Arisan", which produces dry goods; and "Mipelsa", which deals with construction work. The capital of these firms

belongs entirely to the Pérez Jiménez family. In addition, they own several farms and other assets.

The strengthening of the firm has made it possible to structure the group at three different levels. The first level is the family Council, which is responsible for establishing the group's strategy and policy and deciding both medium- and long-term future plans and the share in the assets of each family member –both working and non-working–, reviewing the possibilities for the third generation to join the firm and their professional careers. It is at this level that a cohesive balanced division of assets is achieved between all family members. So far, there has been no lack of family cohesion, perhaps because no third-generation member has joined the firm yet.

On the second level, we find the Board of Directors, made up of those family members actively working in the firm. Its main duties are, among others, to establish the strategies for each of the companies and to allocate staff and expenses among them. This governing body is not formally regulated at present, though they plan to make it more formal in the future, as the organization becomes increasingly complex. There is a chief technical officer for each associated firm: a plant manager in "Arisan" and "Tuccsa" and a technical manager in "Mipelsa". "Mipelsa" is the group's major firm, and it is through this firm that all the investments and agreements outside the group are decided. "Arisan" and "Tuccsa" supply "Mipelsa" and other firms with their products, but almost half their production is consumed within the group.

Cultural characteristics and values

- Beliefs, values and share vision

The personality of "Mipelsa" is a result of its origins and historical evolution. The founder's values are present in the firm. The way Mr. Miguel views the world has become a cultural model which have often been essential for the survival and, above all, for the success of the business. He is an enterprising, sociable and charismatic person who is very much open to dialogue and is concerned not only about his own future and that of his sons and daughters, but also about Martos and its people. One of his main concerns was to create and promote stable employment in his scope of influence and provide his sons with a more promising professional perspective than when he started his business. Especially at the beginning, owners and staff formed a large extended family, so Miguel felt quite responsible for their future. Since his sons joined the firm and, in particular, when his elder son became general manager, they have kept this entrepreneurial culture.

- Excellent customer service and concern for quality

Among the most outstanding values that underlie the firm's culture, mention should be made of the strong interest in getting to know and treating the customer very well; a clear desire to offer good quality and innovative products and services, even if it results in an increase in costs.

- Long term orientation

From the beginning the founder had a very long-term view of the business. He has always kept in mind the idea of growing a big firm to transfer to the next family generation as a legacy. This long term orientation materialises in a policy of re-investment of almost 75% of the benefits. Although they have tried to draw a line between the firm's finances and the family's, they also try not to forget the aforementioned general objectives.

- Knowledge of business (know-how) and experience

The experience and the Know How that the Pérez Jiménez family has been accumulating in the construction industry is a consequence of its almost fifty years working in this industry. Since Mr. Miguel Pérez Luque founded it in the late 1950s, the firm has been growing steadily ever since by the implementation of a clear strategy of vertical integration. The firm has created important production structures and given permanent jobs to many people, including the owner's sons, who have joined the firm little by little.

In terms of technology, the firm is at the same level as its direct competitors, showing a special interest in incorporating the latest technologies available in the market.

- Autonomy of action and finances

A new value was added by the leader of the second generation, Miguel Ángel as a way of fighting against the strongest competitors and of keeping the financial and decisional autonomy at the same time: the shift to cooperation. This has entailed changing the firm's culture from a competitive conception of the relations with its rivals into a cooperative one. He has managed to alter not only his own firm but those of his competitors, who become his most important partners. Therefore, it has not only affected the firm's culture, but also the whole sector. This kind of strategic culture is best seen in the present leader's advocacy and zeal for the creation of GEA 21 (Spanish initials whose meaning is Andalusian Business Group 21) and CEACOP (Spanish initials for Andalusian Circle of firms of the construction industry), two clear examples of cooperation agreements.

- Flexibility and speed of decision making

Nonetheless, free decision is normally used to encourage the personnel, especially the managers of the company. There is a suggestions box at their disposal which allows the owners to know the employees' opinions. Direct contact is the best and most common way of communication between both sides. The promotion of participation and creativity is a very important issue in this firm too. On the other hand, the staff training program is a basic element of the personnel management. It is regarded as a top priority competitive factor. The average percentage of sales devoted to staff training in the last few years is between 1 and 2.5%.

- Loyalty, trust and communication

Generally the relationships in this firm are good because of the high level of trust between the owned family and the employees. In fact, the workers' degree of freedom to express their opinions is high. Harmony prompted by a good positive working atmosphere; and by the policy of free access to any office is perceptible easily. The politeness in conversation among employees, managers and owners is very common too.

The employees are firstly motivated for they have stable permanent work contracts. The company implements a staff promotion policy based on appointing professionally competent employees for higher responsibility posts. Any employee knows he can become a manager if he works hard. The most important criterion to award promotion is the worker's experience in the firm or in another firm belonging to the same group, as well as an excellent performance at work, good degree of knowledge and skills. For the family members, it is necessary to have leadership qualities. Although less important, living in the same town is also taken into account.

- Commitment, dedication and family pride

The degree of involvement of intermediate managers in the objectives is as much satisfactory as the employees' identification with the industrial objectives. The family's and employees' full commitment and sense of responsibility are two important perceptible characteristics. In recent years, safety and hygiene have become essential aspects which, in fact, are required by law. The company members feel responsible for the safety of the staff and are convinced that there cannot be efficiency without severe security measures, even if sometimes the personnel are not eager to put them into practice.

There is a manifest involvement of the firm in the social life of Martos. Thus, "Group CIM" usually participates in social and sports events at provincial level. The degree of social responsibility with its environment is extremely high, so much so that the firms has relations with all the institutions having to do with the development of the province- "Group CIM" always sponsors or financially supports this sort of events.

The owners, from its foundation until the present, have shown their concern not only for the staff's welfare but also about the citizens of Martos and its surrounding area. It is clear that if the "Group CIM" firm stopped being a source of income for Martos, it would simply be because business was not going well. The bonds tying the firm and the town are based on solid emotional relations, so much so that it may be said that the firm will never leave the town due to cost-related or other financial difficulties.

As a conclusion, we believe that this firm is well-positioned to be an incubator for the implementation of spirituality in the workplace for the following reasons:

- The founder and his successor are clearly value-driven, their adaptable and changing leadership has successfully transmitted the firm's culture and strategy to the personnel.
- The two leaders have taken into consideration the staff's needs, difficulties and worries.
- All the characteristics summarized as advantages of family firms are present in the organizational culture of CIM Group. For this reason, taking into account the overlaps with the inner characteristics of spiritual business shown in table 4, its readiness to become a spiritual firm is really high.
- All in all, the company has become an extension of the family, resulting in a modern firm with quite a creative strategy and culture.

Case study 2: Holding O.C.B., Inc., Canada

We will now present a brief case study of a family business that has been internationally recognized for its explicit spiritual practices and values. The information in this section comes from the following sources: A book written by the CEO (Ouimet 2005), research conducted on the company's values (Mather, Fry, and Ouimet 2005), the company's websites, interviews with the management team, interviews with the CEO, and attendance at numerous presentations given by the CEO.

The company is a medium size and well-established Canadian food processing company in Montreal, with annual sales of over 100 million dollars. Founded in 1933 by J.-Rene Ouimet, it employs 400 people and is a part of Holding O.C.B., Inc., a financial group owned by Dr. J.-Robert Ouimet, son of the founder. J.-Robert Ouimet has four

children. . J.-Robert inherited the family business when he was 18, and turned a small food distribution company into a very successful organization with international customers.

His oldest son, Robert Ouimet, has purchased the Ouimet Cordon-Bleu plant and is it's CEO. The original plant, Ouimet Cordon-Bleu, was founded on principles of human dignity. The early experimentation with spiritual management systems began in this plant over 30 years ago. These practices were discontinued when the oldest son took over the plant a couple of years ago. The Cordon-Bleu plant, which had been very successful financially, has had major business problems in recent years, since it discontinued the innovative management practices.

Five years ago the company purchased another food processing company, now called Ouimet-Tomasso, Inc. J.-Robert Ouimet is still CEO of this company, and with a newly hired plant manager, Rob McKenzie, they slowly began implementing similar spiritual management systems in this new company. Some examples of these include: prayer and reflection before management and board meetings; testimonials; a “gesture”; biennial research project on the spiritual values and climate of the organization; rooms for inner silence and reflection; spiritual support group; outreach to people who have been laid off or terminated. Each of these will be explained briefly below.

- Prayer and reflection before management and board meetings

In 1977, the steering committee began a practice of starting their weekly meetings with prayer and reflection. Since that time, the Board meetings and the management committee meetings also begin with prayer and reflection. The company expects that in

the future, if employees are comfortable with it, more meetings will begin with prayer and reflection. One of the basic principles is to honor individual differences in belief and practice and to recognize that there is a great deal of diversity in the company, both in cultural background and in religious upbringing. Expansion of any of the spiritual activities happens very slowly, and only as employees request them.

- Testimonials

In 1980, the company started holding what they called “testimonial” meetings. These meetings, held once or twice a year, are open to all employees, on company time. A speaker is invited to come and tell his or her story of inspiration, a story of overcoming difficulty through spiritual values or principles. Speakers are not allowed to ‘preach’ or to try to convince anyone else of the rightness of their beliefs or practices. They are only asked to share their story.

Over time, more and more spiritual activities were gradually added to the way the company does business. They refer to their approach as ISMA – the Integrated System of Management Activities. The underlying philosophy is that businesses can reconcile human well-being with productivity and profits, and that organizations have an obligation to do so. This is done through unwavering commitment to both the “Economic Systems” and the “Humanistic/Spiritual Systems” in the organization.

Not all the employees in the company take part in the activities of the ISMAs. They are quite free not to. Others take part to the degree they choose to, and when they choose to. But the activities are made available to all, and the company is explicit in deeming the programs an important benefit for all who want to take advantage of them.

- A “Gesture”

One of these activities is called "A Gesture." Two to three times a year, the management team goes together to serve food to the poor. After the meal, they sit with the people they have served and get to know them. When they return to the plant, they meet to talk about what the experience meant to them. Recently, other people in the plant have asked if they can come, and the Gesture is expanding. Anyone who wants can attend, and they go during work hours and it is considered paid time. The "Gesture" might also be a visit to a prison or to a hospital, where Ouimet employees spend time in a small group with people who are not as privileged as they are. According to the management team, this practice builds a very strong sense of connection in the team, and helps people to remember the values of service to the community and to something greater than ourselves.

- Biennial research project on the spiritual values and climate of the organization.

Every other year, the company conducts a research project on the spiritual values and climate of the organization. The variables in this research originally came from J.-Robert's dissertation work at the University of Friborg, Switzerland. The company measures itself on such values as humility, brotherhood, service, dignity, faith, hope, listening to others, and peace-serenity. It also asks employees if they wish to continue or discontinue each of the ISMAs.

- Rooms for inner silence and reflection

Each of the organizations in Holding, O.C.B. Inc. has created a "silence room" on their work site. This is a room where any employee can go to sit quietly and to meditate, pray, or just clear their mind. The rooms have scenes from nature, and are located in a place that is away from the hustle and bustle of work. There are no religious symbols or

icons in the room, so that the room feels more accessible to any employee. The room at the Ouimet-Tomasso plant is softly lit, with a quiet scene from nature on the wall, and plants in the room. The small room at the corporate headquarters also has a beautiful scene from nature, and a white wicker chair that is considered quite sacred because Mother Teresa sat there to meditate when she visited the company.

- Spiritual support group

The company also has created a "Spiritual Support Group." It began with just a few managers and a couple of Board Members. They got together once a month at the same time each month, for the purpose of making contact with the Transcendent. Sometimes a priest or other religious person attends the meeting and offers an ecumenical service to start. They do not ask God for anything for themselves or the company, they just spend time connecting to the Transcendent, whatever that means for them. They also discuss what it means to live by spiritual values in the workplace. Over time, other employees have asked if they can join the group, and are always welcome.

In 1991, the management team established a monthly prayer link with Mother Theresa's contemplative sisters of in Calcutta, along with the contemplative Benedictine sisters in Saint-Eustache, Quebec. These three groups pray for each other during the celebration of the Eucharist on the first Wednesday of the month.

- Outreach to people who have been laid off or terminated

Another unusual practice is that anytime someone is let go from the company, regardless of the reason, the manager who dismissed that person calls them up a few weeks later and asks to have lunch with them to see how they are feeling. Although it is usually pretty uncomfortable, the company feels that this practice is very important

because they want to treat everyone with dignity and caring, even people who are let go. Once a year, all the people who have been laid off or dismissed are invited to come back to the company for a lunch in the management team room. Sometimes they ask to visit people in the plant to say hello, and they are always allowed to do that.

J.-Robert Ouimet travels all over the world to share information about the management philosophy at his company, and frequently college campuses to address business students – who are the leaders of the future.

Results of the ISMAs at Holding O.C.B., Inc.

The research on this company (Ouimet 2003, Matherly, Fry & Ouimet 2005) concludes that the ISMAs lead to an increase in six spiritual values: solidarity, brotherhood, listening to others, human dignity, faith, and hope, as measured by the biennial organizational survey. The company has grown and been profitable almost every single year of its 77 year existence. There is a strong feeling of belonging and loyalty to the company and very low turnover. Absenteeism is substantially lower than the industry's average. Because it is a privately owned company, the owner has tremendous freedom to be able to implement these spiritual activities.

When we compare this company to the list of inner characteristics of spiritual businesses, we find the following:

- Work is a calling: For the management team and the Board of Directors, work is seen as a calling. This is not necessarily so for people at lower levels of the hierarchy.
- Enlightened leaders: J.-Robert and his management team have a deep personal commitment to spiritual development for themselves and others, and demonstrate that through their management practices and their commitment to human well-being.

- Spirited teams: The Board of Directors and the Management Team fit the profile of being spirited teams. This does not yet exist at lower levels in the organization.
- Virtues and values-driven: The organization has identified 18 spiritual and economic values that it is committed to.
- Accountability for values: The company measures itself on its core values and studies how each of the ISMAs help to increase core values.
- Creative, flexible, and adaptive: The company has been quick to respond to challenges such as Mad Cow disease that made it impossible to deliver its food products to the U.S., as well as opportunities that have resulted from growth and expansion of the business.
- Sense of family/community: There is a very strong sense of family among the management team at the Ouimet-Tomasso plant. During plant tours, employees expressed a strong sense of connection and identity with the company. The management team does a lot of community outreach, and a lot of community building within the company. They state that this is a long-term process and that they still have a long way to go.
- Focus on service: Through an emphasis on service to the community with such systems as “The Gesture,” the company creates a strong value of service to each other and to the Transcendent.
- Long-term orientation: J.-Robert Ouimet reports in his public presentations that his company has been working on these spiritual values and practices for over 30 years, and it takes at least 10 years before employees really get comfortable with them. And as a family-owned business, there is the long-term orientation of building wealth and leaving a legacy for the next generation.

Appendix A: International Spirit at Work Award

The International Spirit at Work Award was created in 2001 to honor companies that have explicit spiritual practices, policies or programs. 36 companies from 11 countries have been honored in the last five years. The honorees are:

2002 Honorees

The Body Shop	United Kingdom
Eileen Fisher, Inc.	United States
Embassy Graphics	Canada
Medtronics	United States
Methodist Hospital	United States
Telus Mobility	Canada
Wheaton Franciscan Systems	United States

2003 Honorees

Memorial Hermann Healthcare System	United States
Sounds True, Inc.	United States
SREI International Financial Limited	India
The Times of India	India
Windesheim University of Professional Education	The Netherlands

2004 Honorees

Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd.	Australia, New Zealand
Ascension Health	United States
Centura Health	United States
Excel Industries	India
Hearthstone Homes	United States
PeaceHealth	United States
Phenomenex	USA, UK, Germany, New Zealand and Australia
Planters Development Bank	Philippines
Saint Francis Health Center	United States
Saint Luke's Episcopal Health System	United States

2005 Honorees

Aarti International	India
Catholic Health Initiatives	United States
Central DuPage Hospital	United States
Elcoteq Communications Technology GmbH	Germany
Fachklinik Heiligenfeld GmbH	Germany
Mount Carmel Health	United States

Providence Health Care
 St. Joseph Health Systems
 Van Ede and Partners

Canada
 United States
 The Netherlands

2006 Honorees

Clean ServicePower GmbH
 In Search of Common Ground
 Jesuit Social Services
 Nicholas Piramal, Ltd.

Germany
 United States and Worldwide
 Australia
 India

Each of these organizations has made a commitment to nurture the human spirit and is engaged in business practices that are models for other organizations.

About International Spirit at Work Award

The Award was inspired by the late visionary futurist Willis Harman, PhD (1919-1997). Four groups “co-own” and “co-organize” the Award: The Association for Spirit at Work (www.spiritatwork.org); the Spirit in Business Institute (www.spiritinbusiness.org); The World Business Academy (www.worldbusiness.org) and the European Bahá’í Business Forum (www.ebbf.org).

Selection Criteria:

To be selected for an award an organization must meet the following criteria :

- have at least 60 full-time employees and be at least five years old
- demonstrate both vertical and horizontal dimensions of Spirituality are demonstrated at the organization
- have sustained the explicitly spiritual project, policy or practice being acknowledged for at least one year
- have a long term commitment to continuing Spirit at Work initiatives.
- be considered exemplary in its commitment to Spirit at Work.

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TABLES

Authors	Utilitarian Proposals	Semasiological Proposals
Allaire and Firsirotu (1984)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations as Sociocultural Systems - <i>Functionalist School</i> - <i>Structural-Functionalist School</i> - <i>Ecological-Adaptationist School</i> - <i>Historical-Diffusionist School</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture as an Ideational System - <i>Cognitive School</i> - <i>Structuralist School</i> - <i>Mutual-Equivalence Structure School</i> - <i>Symbolic School</i>
Smircich (1983)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative Management • Contingency Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Cognition • Organizational Symbolism • Structural/Psychodynamic Perspective
Sanday (1979)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic - <i>Explicative Structural-Functionalist</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic - <i>Interpretative-Configurationist</i> • Semiotic • Behavioristic
Martin (1992)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration • Diferentiation • Fragmentation 	

Source: the authors

TABLE 2
Internal Characteristics of Spiritual Businesses

Characteristics	Authors
• Work is a calling	Finney and Dasch (1998), Levoy (1997), Wedemeyer and Jue (2002), Fox (1994), Moxley (2000), Ray (2004), Hogan (2000), Boldt (1991), Howard & Welbourne (2004), Neal (2006)
• Enlightened leaders	Moxley (2000), Wheatley (1992), Autry (1991), Chatterjee (1998), Conger (1994), DePree (1989), George (2003), Liebig (1994), Stephen (2002), Gunther (2004), Howard & Welbourne (2004), Neal (2006)
• Spirited teams	Heermann (1997), Levine (1994), Nirenberg (1995), Moxley (2000), Gunther (2004)
• Virtues and values-driven	Gibbons (2000), Barrett (1998), Marcic (1997), Chakraborty (1991), Manz, Manz, Marx, & Neck (2001), Mitroff & Denton (1999), Liebig (1994), Cameron, Dutton & Quinn (2003), Manz, Cameron, Manz & Marx (2006), Parboteeah and Cullen (2003)
• Accountability for values	Gibbons (2000), Hogan (2000), Renesch and DeFoore (1996), Howard & Welbourne (2004), Fox (1994), Gunther (2004), Barrett (1998)
• Creative, flexible and adaptive	Jones (1995, 2005), Barrett (1998), Osterberg (1993), Neal (2006)
• Sense of family/community	Hogan (2000), Mitroff & Denton (1999), Parboteeah and Cullen (2003)
• Focus on service	Greenleaf (1977), Fox (1994), Kurth (1994), Mitroff & Denton (1999), Gunther (2004), Frick (2004), Neal (2000, 2006)
• Long-term orientation	Kurth (1994), Fox (1994), Osterberg (1993), Liebig (1994), Zohar & Marshall (2004)

Source: the authors

Cultural advantages	Authors
• Knowledge of business (know-how) and experience	Kets de Vries (1993, 1996), Leach (1993), Ginebra (1997), Donckels and Lambrecht (1999)
• Long-term orientation	Kets de Vries (1993, 1996), Leach (1993), Gallo (1995), Ginebra (1997), Ibrahim and Ellis (1994), Davis (1983), Poutziouris (2001)
• Commitment, dedication and family pride	Kets de Vries (1993, 1996), Leach (1993), Gallo (1995), Ginebra (1997), Ibrahim and Ellis (1994), Poza (1995), Tagiuri and Davis (1996), Cauffman (1996), Poutziouris (2001)
• Loyalty, trust and communication	Gallo (1995), Ibrahim and Ellis (1994), Leach (1993), Tagiuri and Davis (1996), Davis (1983), St. James (1999), Poutziouris (2001)
• Flexibility and speed of decision-making	Kets de Vries (1993, 1996), Leach (1993), Gallo (1995), Ginebra (1997), Donckels and Lambrecht (1999), Tagiuri and Davis (1996), Poza (1995), Cauffman (1996), Davis (1983)
• Beliefs, values and shared vision	Ibrahim and Ellis (1994), Tagiuri and Davis (1996)
• Excellent customer service and concern for quality	Poza (1995), Davis (1983), Ginebra (1997)
• Autonomy of action and finances	Kets de Vries (1993, 1996), Donckels and Lambrecht (1999), Ginebra (1997), Poza (1995), Cauffman (1996), Poutziouris (2001).

Source: The authors

Similarities-Links	
Cultural advantages of Family Firms	Inner Characteristics of Spiritual Businesses
• Knowledge of business (know-how) and experience	Work is a calling
• Long-term orientation	Long-term orientation
• Commitment, dedication and family pride	Work is a calling Enlightened leaders Virtues and values-driven Sense of family/community
• Loyalty, trust and communication	Enlightened leaders Sense of family/community Spirited teams
• Flexibility and speed of decision-making	Spirited teams Creative, flexible, and adaptive
• Beliefs, values and shared vision	Enlightened leaders Virtues and values- driven
• Excellent customer service and concern for quality	Work is a calling Spirited teams Focus on service
• Autonomy of action and finances	

Source: The authors.