

## What's Different About Leading Today? Tradition

When I think of the word "tradition" I think of the 1956 movie, "The King & I" with Yul Brynner and Deborah Kerr (even though Jodie Foster starred in a remake, nothing could take the place of the original in my mind). Anyway, in one scene we see the King of Siam stomping around his palace, barefoot with hands on hips, extolling the benefits of "Tradition, tradition, tradition!"

Is there any reason we should look to the traditions of yesterday?

From The Centre for Population and Urban Research at Monash University we learn that 32% of Australian adults now depend primarily on welfare payments of various kinds and 41% of children under 15 years of age live in welfare-dependent households.	In 1997, the CSIRO National Survey found 52% of the Australian population believed the quality of life was becoming more and more eroded (only 13% thought it was getting better!).	Over one million Australians are either unemployed or under-employed, while those in full-time work are now working such long hours that their overtime, alone, accounts for another 500,000 full-time jobs! Over 25% of paid workers in Australia now have part time jobs!
There are more single households, more working mothers, more non-traditional families trying to cope with ever increasing pressures of life. There's less time for reflection or even cooking a meal (53% of Australians eat out regularly!). The latest iteration of the X-Y-Z generation is reacting & dropping out to pursue more conservative traditions from 2 generations back.		

Traditions are the doctrines, beliefs, customs "the story of who we are" that we hold in the back of our minds, like worn photos passed down from previous generations. Today, the search for old-fashioned" values at work and home is growing. Customers (and all levels of staff) are typically so time and cash poor they have little time to keep a healthy balance in their lives.

As a leader, you are likely already dealing with symptoms of this tradition-tension. People sense there used to be a better way -- they want and need recognition for achievements, the opportunity to enjoy and feel safe at work, to be validated from their efforts (and not just with more money!) and to be encouraged in authentic ways rather than grow more into faceless names or disembodied voices, dealing more with (distancing) technology than ever before.

The response to this pressure and psycho-neutering isn't good. Contact centre leaders are frequently searching for ways to address increased rage, burnout, gossip, depression, high absenteeism and turnover from staff attempting to cope with the expansion of their roles with little, if any, additional compensation, let alone job security or loyalty. Add to this the pressure from working with customers frequently dissatisfied and frustrated with how they're treated, and the problem grows serious.

This is one of the most unrecognized challenges of leadership today.

**[Read about the author, Darlene D. Richard, at www.CallCentreINTEGRITY.com/articles.htm](http://www.CallCentreINTEGRITY.com/articles.htm)**