

# THE POWER TO DO GOOD

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*We have an unprecedented opportunity to boldly break traditional paradigms and awaken talented workers ready and waiting to step up.*

I was horrified at news that Matt Lauer had been pretending to be a good guy while secretly premeditating assaults on women in his office.

Tragically, we see that Lauer is just one in a tidal wave of men misusing their power to coerce and abuse subordinates. Jim Collins, the author of "Good to Great," points out in "How the Mighty Fall" that the transgressions of a single leader, consumed by hubris and power, can put their company in peril.

We are at risk, yet again, of having expensive regulatory policies loaded onto private industry due to corrupt behaviors of corporate executives and their boards who turn a blind eye. Now is an opportunity for closely-held, owner-operated companies to separate from the pack. It's pro-business to create positive environments where people can do their best work.

If ever there was a time to stand out from the crowd to attract top, diverse talent, this is it. But without good role models, the question is how? Here are three leaders who wondered how to do this ... so we figured it out together.

- Mike hoped to avoid the abuse topic. Three years ago, one of his 15-year employees was fired for sexual harassment. Firing this guy was the right decision, but his deception was hard for people to get over. Mike dreaded discussing the harassment news because he

didn't want to open old wounds — but he knew if he was thinking about it, so was everyone else. Mike brought his leadership team together, and found they had a surprising interest in taking this on as an engagement initiative. Mike was proud of his team and of his own courage.

- But Susan wanted to use the news of rampant sexual harassment to affirm that her company is not just a place to grow revenue, but also the careers of her employees. She used the news to emphasize the integrity in her company's core values. She has begun to personally gather "good deed" stories from employees to put in a monthly newsletter which also allows her to get closer to what's going on. Susan got involved and became visible.
- Wayne's daughter called from college, asking urgently if he knew how his HR department handled sexual harassment, and could he be sure his company was doing the right thing. Wayne didn't believe there were problems, but he wasn't on top of the situation enough to answer his daughter's questions. We got right on it. He met with HR, reviewed any complaints, and sent leadership a strong, clear message by putting the matter on the regular agenda. Wayne was glad he was prompted to get answers

Each company needs to find their own way to expansive thinking, energized discussions and quality performance. We have an unprecedented opportunity to boldly break traditional paradigms and awaken talented people ready to step up. Start the conversation. Let your people know where you stand — don't leave them guessing. Be the leader you want to be, and then lead better than that.