

# PERFORMANCE BREAKTHROUGH

## The FOUR Secrets of Passionate Organizations

Second Edition

SAMPLE CONTENT

Foreword by  
**VERNE HARNISH**,  
CEO Gazelles, author of  
*Scaling Up (Rockefeller  
Habits 2.0)*



# MIKE GOLDMAN

SAMPLE CONTENT

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BREAKTHROUGH

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of Passionate Organizations

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**Mike Goldman**



[www.highpointpubs.com](http://www.highpointpubs.com)

NEW YORK — SAN FRANCISCO

**PERFORMANCE BREAKTHROUGH:**

The Four Secrets of Passionate Organizations

*Second Edition*

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This edition published by Highpoint Executive Publishing.  
For information, write to [info@highpointpubs.com](mailto:info@highpointpubs.com).

Second Edition

ISBN: 978-0-9891054-7-7

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Goldman, Mike

Performance Breakthrough—*Second Edition*

**Summary:** "Imagine the impact of injecting more passion into your team. Imagine a company where eight out of ten people are truly engaged. What would this mean to your teams' productivity, morale, retention, and the ability to recruit? This book contains the answers to the challenges of creating a more passionate, productive and profitable organization." —Provided by publisher.

ISBN: 978-0-9891054-7-7 (hardbound)

1. Business 2. Management

Library of Congress Control Number: 2014956415

Design by Sarah Clarehart

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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## FOREWORD

There is a war for talent.

The majority of mid-market leaders around the world tell me that the biggest obstacle to growth is having the right people. The first part of the challenge is finding the right talent to hire. The second part of the challenge, and the focus of this book, is maximizing the performance of the people already on your team.

Here's a key question I ask business leaders:

Are all of your employees happy and engaged in the business, and would you rehire all of them?

An honest answer to this question can result in a revolutionary change in your business. Passionate, engaged employees are a requirement to achieve consistent top- and bottom-line growth in any organization. Grumpy, disengaged employees alienate good customers, kill productivity, and send "A" players running to the competition.

In fact, Tip Kindell, founder and CEO of The Container Store, believes that one high performer is as productive as three mediocre performers. How much more effective would your organization be if you could simply increase your number of high performers ("A" players) by just 20 to 30 percent? Would your competitors stand a chance if 70 to 80 percent of the people on your team functioned at an "A" level?

As a business leader, having the right people not only impacts the performance of your organization, but your own happiness. After all, if you don't enjoy coming to work, how do you think your employees feel?

What are you doing to create an environment ripe for high performers to flourish? If you created that environment, how much easier would it be to attract and recruit other “A” players?

*Performance Breakthrough* provides a framework to drive enthusiasm and engagement throughout your organization. This framework is based on simple, actionable, and inexpensive ideas, not high-level concepts. The story, case studies, and tools you’re about to learn will both motivate you to inject more passion into your organization, and provide you with specific steps to make it happen.

It’s simple: Implement the tools and techniques in this book, then watch your profits and morale soar.

And by the way ... it’s a great read!

– **Verne Harnish, CEO Gazelles,**  
**author of *Scaling Up (Rockefeller Habits 2.0)***



*To Angela, Richie, and Jessica –  
You make me strive to be a better person every day.*



## PREFACE TO THE 2<sup>ND</sup> EDITION

In the five years since the first edition of this book was published, a great deal has changed in the business world. We struggled our way out of the Great Recession, the Dow Jones Industrial Average doubled, and unemployment decreased by over 30 percent. What hasn't changed are the fundamentals of team dynamics and the opportunity to improve our results by injecting more passion into our organizations.

If anything, the opportunity has increased with the layoffs and cost-cutting that resulted from the economic downturn. This has meant greater stress on employees as companies continue to do more with less.

During any economic cycle, if you want an extraordinary company, you need extraordinary people. People will not perform at their highest levels without a heavy dose of passion fueling their efforts.

While the story at the heart of this book is relatively unchanged, I have made several enhancements based on feedback from the first edition as well as on new tools and ideas I've uncovered while working with clients over the last five years.

The enhancements in this second edition include:

- **New Tools:** I've added new "starter" ideas in the summary sections for each of the four secrets. These ideas will dramatically improve your effectiveness in implementing this book's concepts and seeing significant results. The new ideas for this edition of the book were identified through my work with clients as well as from a set of amazing midmarket business growth tools from Gazelles ([www.Gazelles.com](http://www.Gazelles.com)).

- ⊗ **Case Studies:** I've given dozens of speeches based on the concepts described in the book, and the most common question I get is, "Which companies have actually implemented these ideas?" In response, I've added case studies focused on organizations that have implemented at least one of the secrets, describing their key actions and results. I hope these will inspire you to follow their lead.
- ⊗ **Website Integration/Community Building:** Instead of writing a third edition to this book someday, I've decided to use the Internet to continuously update its tools, ideas, and case studies. I've also used the web to turn this book into more of a conversation by allowing you, the reader, to communicate your own best practices and case studies. It's my hope that through these tools, we can build a community by sharing ideas on how to inject more passion into our organizations. The website is [www.passionateorganizations.com](http://www.passionateorganizations.com), and you'll find references to it throughout this book.

# INTRODUCTION

I've worked with dozens of companies over the last twenty-five years and, without exception, the largest opportunity for every one of them was the same. Big or small—from large organizations such as Disney, Levi Strauss, and Polo Ralph Lauren to the local accounting firm, hotel, or plumber—the largest opportunity for improvement was helping *people* better realize their potential. New strategies, processes, and systems are certainly important, but people will trump them every time.

Gallup Organization research has concluded that only 29 percent of employees are truly engaged in the work they do. This means 71 percent of your employees are trying their best just to get through the day. It also means they would probably not think twice before leaving for a better, or maybe just a different, opportunity.

Think about a 29 percent engagement! That's like an engine running at less than one-third of its power. How can a team reach its potential, or even come anywhere close, with that level of engagement?

Imagine the impact of injecting more passion into your team. Imagine a company where eight out of ten people are truly engaged. What would this mean to your team's productivity, morale, retention, and ability to recruit top talent?

Imagine a work environment where

- you are not crushed by the stampede out the door at 5:00 p.m.
- team members offer their help without being asked
- team members offer their ideas without being asked

- team members find ways to get the job done, not excuses for why they can't
- internal celebration replaces internal competition
- customer loyalty replaces customer satisfaction.

This environment can be your new reality, but it comes with a number of challenges.

## **Managing for Today and Tomorrow**

People don't quit companies; rather, they quit managers. The days of iron-fisted bosses who run their people into the ground but are rewarded for "making the numbers" are gone. These days, people, not factories or raw materials, are a company's most valuable resource. Do any of the following sound familiar?

- ▣ **Increased Employee Turnover:** In any economy, new technologies and flexible work arrangements have given employees more choices than ever before—and, by the way, your best employees have the most choices, and therefore more reason to leave! Think about the impact that would have on your customers, employee morale, hiring costs, training, and the number of non-gray hairs on your head. If you haven't begun to see this problem in your organization, you will. If you don't tackle this problem today, you will pay dearly to solve it tomorrow.
- ▣ **Difficulty in Recruiting:** Finding good people is difficult. Regardless of the current economy, baby boomers hitting retirement age will cause a shortage of people to fill skilled jobs. Most good candidates will have several opportunities from which to choose. This will cause two types of problems: either your company will be understaffed as you wait longer to fill those open spots or you'll rush to fill open spots by settling for employees who are not really qualified for the job.
- ▣ **Low Productivity and Profitability:** Most people who are not passionate about their jobs don't quit; they stick around and

become the “walking dead.” These zombies look like they’re working, but they probably top out at about 15 percent of their potential. What’s worse is that negative attitudes are more contagious than positive ones. Poor morale is like a cancer slowly killing your organization.

These types of problems usually are brought on by the following:

- ▣ **Overlooking the Most Valuable Resource:** Companies make a considerable effort in looking for the next big thing: cutting-edge products, increased automation, new markets, and more efficient processes. However, they spend comparatively little time figuring out how to get a higher return from the most valuable resource they have: their people.
- ▣ **Accepting Old-Style Management:** Old-style management still prevails at many companies. Dictatorial environments include executives who believe employees should be passionate about their jobs simply because they get a paycheck. Even in more forward-thinking companies, leaders know the dictatorial style no longer works but have never been taught how to truly lead people to get optimal results. When employees are asked what is most important to them, studies consistently show that money is not even in the top five. Things like the type of work, respectful treatment, opportunities, coaching, and development are most important.
- ▣ **Failing to Understand Multigenerational Workforces:** Four distinct generations make up today’s workforce—veterans, boomers, generation X, and generation Y. While it’s dangerous to stereotype, each generation has its own values, motivations, and work ethic.

The following quotes are typical of boomers:

- “These kids just want everything handed to them on a silver platter. I can’t seem to find a way to get them to work hard.”

- “Doesn’t anyone understand company loyalty anymore?”

The following quotes are typical of generation Y:

- “Why should I work my butt off for twenty-five years for one company when there are so many other good opportunities out there?”
- “I didn’t go to school for seventeen years so I could just follow orders. There’s more value I can add, but no one will let me.”

While diversity can be a great strength for any organization, the reality is most companies fail to understand how best to take advantage of these differences.

## **Your Blueprint for Success**

The following pages reveal the answers to these challenges, with the promise of creating a more passionate, productive, and profitable organization. You’ll find that the ideas discussed are not expensive to implement. In fact, many can be executed without spending a dime.

This book’s message is communicated in the form of a fictional story to help make these ideas real and implementable, as opposed to presenting fuzzy concepts. I hope you’ll find it also makes for a more enjoyable read.

Mike Goldman

*President, Performance Breakthrough*



**BEGINNINGS:**

# THE WAKE-UP CALL

## WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED?

**M**y name is Andy Martin, and success had always been a given for me—a job with a top technology services firm right out of college and a career rocket launch into space from there. Staff, senior, manager, partner ... there was no stopping me. Traveling all over the country, working with Fortune 500 companies—it didn't get any better than that ... except for “traveling all over the country” part.

Three years ago, I decided I'd had enough of parenting and husbanding (is that a word?) by phone. Being out of town Monday through Friday was getting incredibly old. It was time to start actually participating in my children's lives and spending some quality, unrushed time with my beautiful wife. Besides, I didn't need to work for someone else anymore. After seventeen years, I was an “expert.” So why not start my own firm, working wherever and for whomever I wanted?

Hence the birth of A.M. Technology Services and the start of “the good life.” Or, so I thought.

It's amazing how quickly you can go through seventeen years of savings and two lines of credit when you're really focused—and, boy, was I focused.

Things started off strong. A few local clients who I'd worked with at my previous job decided to give the new firm a shot. I hired six employees, and the company was off to the races. We beat our plan each of the first twelve months, and we were up to fifty employees before the glue was dry on our office nameplate. That's when the real “fun” started.



It's hard to see the floor falling out beneath you when you're running as fast as I was, but by the time I looked down, the fall was pretty steep.

It started when our largest client, who made up 40 percent of our business, decided it wanted to go "in a different direction." I'm still not entirely sure what that meant, or in what new direction the company was now headed. What I am sure of is that we would no longer be paying our bills with a portion of our biggest client's profits. It also meant I had twenty consultants "on the bench." (That's consultant-speak for getting paid for doing nothing.)

The fun continued when I informed those on-the-bench consultants that they now had to work on some business development activities (that's tech-speak for selling). Since, for some people, "selling" is a dirty word, within two months, half of my on-the-bench technology developers decided to quit. Of course, they included a good portion of my top performers.

Over the next several months, we teetered on the brink of success and failure. Clients would come and go, employees would come and go, and our high-growth business was shrinking by the month. The "rah-rah" attitude we started with was now almost completely gone. Employees weren't happy, clients weren't happy, and I wasn't exactly a thrill to be around.

This is where our story begins.

## 2

### SLIDING DOWNHILL

I arrived at the office 7:15 a.m. as usual. I was always the first one in and the last one out. I used the quiet time to work on things impossible to get to when employees and clients were awake.

This particular morning's goal was a new attendance policy. In professional services, it's important to be there when your clients are. That usually means you're in before they arrive at their offices and out after they're gone. We like to think it gives the illusion of non-stop work (although I don't think our clients are really that naive).

During our go-go growth days of year one, I needed to threaten people to get them to go home. By year three, you could be trampled if you were standing in the doorway at 5:00 p.m.

It was about 8:30 a.m. when the phone rang. It was John Simms, my director of business development. He helped me start the company and was basically my right-hand man. John and I had known each other for fifteen years. He joined Vincore Technologies (my old firm) five years after me. I became something of a mentor to him, but he was a quick study. After a few years, it was less of a mentoring relationship and more of a partnership. I made sure he was on my team for every important project. When I decided to leave Vincore, it was almost a foregone conclusion that he would come with me. When I was up to my ears in day-to-day problems, he was the one person I could count on to think strategically and keep us heading in the right direction.

"Andy, it's John. Are you free to talk this morning? I need to speak with you."

This didn't sound good. "I'm free now, what's up?"

"I'd rather stop by your office and talk in person; will you be around in about thirty minutes?"

This really didn't sound good. "I'll be here. I'll see you then."

Any discussion that can't happen over the phone is usually bad news. John was leading the effort to get Vault Communications (our second-biggest client) to start a big new project we had been proposing to them for the past four months. It would have meant a major new revenue stream and some new relationships with a very important client. My guess was John wanted to tell me, in person, that we hadn't won the work. In retrospect, that news wouldn't have been so bad.

At 9:00 a.m., John knocked on my door.

"Come on in, John. Even bad news might be welcome if it gives me a break from writing this damn attendance policy."

John came in, sat down, and looked awfully serious.

He started with a deep breath. "Andy, you know how much I've loved working here right?"

Uh-oh.

"From day one, I've put my heart and soul into this job. I've worked crazy hours and never complained. I've prioritized this company over family and friends because I always felt we were doing something important for our clients and employees."

"What's your point, John?" I interrupted.

"I just don't feel it anymore, Andy. I used to have so much passion for the work we did that I didn't care what it took to get the job done. Now I'm looking at my watch all day, counting the hours and wishing I was somewhere else."

"I know business has been a little rough, but we'll get back on track."

"You don't understand, Andy. I can deal with things when they get rough. We've been through difficult times before and gotten through it. The problem is this place has changed. You've changed too."

“Now wait a minute, John. I’ve got a business to run and could use some support. I’m sorry if I’m not a ray of sunshine every day! You’re out there wining and dining clients, while I need to deal with real life back here. Do you know what it’s like spending half your day putting out fires?”

“That’s just my point, Andy. It’s not fun anymore. We always said if it wasn’t fun, we’d stop doing it.”

I slumped back in my chair and waited for the other shoe to drop. And then he hit me with it ...

“Andy, I’ve decided to move on. Vincore offered to take me back with a promotion, and it’s too good an opportunity to pass up.” He took a deep breath, then said, “I’m giving you my two-week notice.”

I was speechless. Although I owned the firm, I never thought of John as an employee; he was more of a partner. How could he do this to the company? How could he do this to me? For the lack of anything constructive to say, my reaction was short, sweet, and pretty heartless.

“Thanks for everything, John. No need for a two-week notice; you can leave as soon as you gather your personal belongings.”

“Andy, please don’t ... ”

“Good-bye, John. I’ve got work to do.”

Upon reflection, working on the attendance policy was the best part of my day.

## A QUADROPHENIA KIND OF NIGHT

The drive home that night was a chance to unwind. Listening to motivational CDs or upbeat music would not do the trick. Instead, it was The Who's *Quadrophenia*—a rock opera about suicidal youth in 1960s London ... not exactly upbeat. Alone in the car, screaming every word to every angry, suicidal song changed my mood all right. I've always liked anger better than depression anyway.

I said it was a chance to unwind. I didn't say I actually unwound.

As I put my key in my front door, I heard yelling coming from inside the house. Either my family was listening to *Quadrophenia* too, or my son had another banner day at school. Ah, home sweet home.

I was tempted to turn around and jump back in the car again, but, against my better judgment, I went inside.

"Hello, I'm home!" I tried to scream over the yelling.

The yelling continued, but I heard the pitter-patter of six feet running down the stairs to greet me. My three-year-old Labrador retriever jumped me, and my ten-year-old daughter was not far behind.

"Hi, Daddy! Wanna see my new dance routine?"

"Sure, honey, let's see."

Jenny was actually an excellent dancer. One of the highlights of my year was going to her dance recital. However, tonight's show was interrupted by Rocky jumping all over her with each new move.

"You and Rocky make a great team, honey. How was school?"

"Good, but I gotta go. I was in the middle of texting my friends, and they're probably wondering where I am."

She lives half her life on her iPhone. It's a wonder kids even actually talk to one another these days.

I walked into the kitchen to find my wife, Susan, and my twelve-year-old son, Bobby, in the heat of battle. This skirmish, like most, was caused by another rough day at school.

We had found out a year earlier that Bobby had something called Asperger's syndrome. Asperger's can be difficult to describe, but I think it was created to push my buttons and test the limits of my sanity.

It's basically a high-functioning form of autism. Although individual cases can be very different, people with Asperger's develop a very narrow and deep set of likes and interests as a way of blocking out the world because the world is too overwhelming for them.

Bobby's interests were TV, video games and ... did I mention video games? He had an obsession with his way of doing things and a very black-and-white perspective on the world. Relating to people was very difficult for him. His lack of natural social skills and rigid set of interests gave him a maturity level much younger than his twelve years.

It wasn't all bad though; he also had an incredible memory, terrific math skills, and came out with some hilarious comments from time to time—like the time he said a cemetery was “like a garden of dead people.” Asperger's kids definitely have a different way of looking at the world.

Bobby's Asperger's started when he was about a year and a half old. He was way behind in his ability to speak and had a temper so bad that he had a black-and-blue mark on his forehead for six months from banging it against the wall and floor. Over the next nine years, he was diagnosed with almost every three-letter acronym I'd ever heard of. Issues ran from heartbreaking to frustrating.

For example, when he was nine, Bobby spent two weeks putting his head inside his shirt and sitting in the hallway at school during lunch. The teachers tried to get him to go back into the lunchroom, but he wouldn't move or speak. It turns out the other kids were teas-

ing him and that was his way of dealing with it. Fifth graders can be pretty cruel to someone who is “different.” I know; I was one of those cruel fifth graders a long time ago.

Then there’s the issue of getting up in the morning and getting ready for school. If we didn’t stay on top of him every step of the way—waking up, getting dressed, brushing his teeth, etc.—he would forget what he needed to do and sit down to pet the dog for twenty minutes. It was a constant struggle getting him out of the house on time.

He also didn’t learn the way other children did. Most kids naturally picked up on social cues and basic life skills by watching others. Bobby needed to be taught these skills, usually unwillingly, over and over again.

Like I said—heartbreaking and frustrating.

Anyway, back to the yelling I heard when I walked in. “What happened now?” For some unknown reason, I decided to join the battle instead of tiptoeing away quietly.

“School is so boring! I can’t stand it anymore! The other kids are annoying, and the teachers treat me like I’m in jail!”

“I know all that,” I complained. “You’ve been telling me that every day for the last six years, but what specifically happened today?”

That’s when my wife jumped in. “Tell Daddy what you said to your teacher.”

“I don’t remember,” he lied.

“Bobby, I’ll find out one way or another, so you might as well tell me.”

“Okay ... I, um, told Mrs. Mackay she was a moron.”

“Excuse me?”

“She wouldn’t leave me alone. She kept trying to get me to finish my writing assignment, but I had nothing left to write. I hate writing!”

I won’t bore you with the rest of the conversation, but it ended with a bit more screaming and three Nintendo-less days for my son.



“What are we gonna do with him? Things seem to be getting worse,” Susan said as we got into bed that evening.

“I don’t know, but, to be honest, I just can’t deal with it now. I’m living a nightmare at work, and things seem to be getting worse, not better. By the way, our new psychologist is really working miracles with Bobby,” I said sarcastically.

About three months ago, we had started seeing our third family psychologist in the last two years. None of them seemed to have any more of a clue than Susan and I did about how to get through to Bobby. This last one said he’d worked with Asperger’s kids. I guess I should have asked if he actually helped them as well.

“I plan on making some calls tomorrow. I got a recommendation from ASPEN that I’d like us to check out.” ASPEN is an Asperger’s support group we’d recently joined.

“Great,” I said. But to myself what I really thought was, “Here we go again.”



# 4

## THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

The next morning, it was time to tell the team that John had quit. I'm sure most of them already knew, but I needed to make it official and get their thoughts. I scheduled a meeting of my leadership team for 9:00 a.m.

When I arrived at 7:15, the message light on my phone was on. That was never good news. For some reason, if someone left a message during the day, it was fifty-fifty whether it would be good news or bad. But when someone left a message overnight, it was almost always some problem that would screw up most of the next day. My prediction was right.

The message was from Vault Communications. A competitor had beaten us out for the new project we had proposed. Vault liked our ideas but just thought our team lacked the passion they needed to be successful. This was going to throw a major wrench in our ability to meet our sales forecast for the following quarter. In addition, since our current project with them was due to be completed at the end of that month, it also meant ten more people on the bench.

The worst part of the message was the passion comment. It was an eerie echo of John's complaint when he quit the day before. Was John right? Of course he was. Most of our employees looked like they were sleepwalking through the day. The question was why were they sleeping and how could I wake them up?

I decided to call Vault to see if there was any way to save the business and get another chance. No one was there, so I left a voice mail—one I knew would probably not be returned.

Ah, another beautiful start to the day.



The team meeting didn't start until about 9:15 a.m. I was there promptly at 9:00 a.m., but the full team hadn't staggered in for another fifteen minutes. I guess when you're sleepwalking, it's hard to find the conference room.

Now that John was gone, my leadership team was made up of four directors.

Kim Edwards headed up our consumer products industry group. She had been with us for a year and a half and made an impact from day one. She was incredibly bright and talented. Most clients loved Kim because she was as honest as they came. Some hated her for the same reason. If she felt strongly about something, you were going to hear it whether you liked it or not. Tact was not one of her finer qualities.

Joe Cialone managed our utilities and telecommunications industry group. Joe had been with us from the beginning. What Joe lacked in analytical skills, he made up for with his incredible network. He knew everyone, and everyone knew him. If you needed a good plumber, Joe knew a guy. If you needed a great seat to a concert, Joe knew a guy. If you needed a contact at a potential client, Joe knew a guy.

Rich Anderson led our technology services group. Rich's team was made up of "bits and bytes" techies that supported the work of the industry groups. He had been with us for about two years, but I don't think that any of us really felt like we knew him. He did a solid job with our tech group. His team and our clients really respected him, but he liked to keep to himself more often than not.

Linda Friedman was our controller. Like Joe, Linda had been with us from day one. Nobody knew numbers like Linda. She had a photographic memory and could quote budget line items in her sleep. Linda was old school and ruled our numbers and her team with an iron fist.

“From the serious look on your faces, I’m sure you all know John resigned yesterday,” I started. I decided not to say anything about the Vault Communications message yet.

The nods around the table were unanimous.

Kim chimed in first. “Tell me you didn’t see that coming, Andy.”

“No, Kim, I didn’t. I always thought of John as a friend and a loyal member of the team. I know we’ve been going through a rough time, but I didn’t expect he’d quit on us.”

“He didn’t ‘quit on us,’ Andy,” Kim countered. “He left for what he thought was a better opportunity. I spoke to him yesterday before he left. He was pretty upset. He said that he didn’t want it to come to this but that he did what he felt he had to do. We all see what’s happened to the business over the last year, and, frankly, it’s pretty scary.”

“Come on, Kim.” Linda, visibly angry, entered the conversation. “If John made his sales numbers, we wouldn’t be in this situation in the first place. Seems to me we’re better off without him.”

“Now wait a minute, Linda. None of us are happy about this situation, but we’re not going to sit here and disparage John.” I quickly shifted gears in defense of my old friend. “He helped us build this company, and I’ve considered him a friend for a long time. I’m angry too, but beating him up after he’s walked out the door won’t help the situation. We need to look forward and figure out how to deal with this.”

“The more important issue,” Joe agreed, “is what do we do now? Should we try to find a replacement or just split up his responsibilities?”

“I disagree,” Kim argued. “Our priority needs to be figuring out how to make sure the rest of us don’t follow John out the door. How do we inject some passion back in to this place? How do we make this a rewarding place to work at again?”

As usual, Kim was right on the money.

“I agree with Kim. We obviously need to fill in the gap for John’s

responsibilities, but our priority needs to be fixing the problems that led to this. What do you think, Linda?” I knew she’d have some strong opinions and wanted to bring her into the conversation.

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“How do we inject some passion back in to this place? How do we make this a rewarding place to work at again?”

“I’m honestly not sure I see the problem,” Linda said with a confused look. “People leave companies all the time, and you just need to deal with it. They’re only loyal to themselves. You can’t blame them. I don’t feel like it’s our job to make sure people are passionate about what they do,” she said with a sarcastic accent on the word passionate. “They have a job to do and they should do it. They should be thankful they have a job. If it doesn’t make them passionate, they should grow up or find something else.”

“And you think we should just let people go without trying to do something about it?” Rich said, amazed at Linda’s attitude.

“Here’s what we’re going to do,” I interrupted before Linda had a chance to answer. “I want each of you to spend a significant amount of time over the next week speaking with your teams and doing some hard thinking yourselves about our situation. We need to understand why we’re in this situation and how the heck to get out. I’d like to get back together in a week to talk about our challenges and brainstorm what we need to do about it. I need you all to take this assignment very seriously. In the meantime, I’ll take over John’s responsibilities.”

“Sounds like a good idea Andy,” Joe said smiling. “The only problem is, with you heading up business development, we may be out of business by next week.”

At least someone still had a sense of humor.