

Leadership Inspiration in Uncertain Times...

How Flying Fish From The 1990's Could Save Your Team From The Mental Impact of COVID-19



Knowing how to navigate the uncertain times of COVID-19 is tricky. It brings a whole new set of challenges to businesses and the world economy.

As a leader, it's a good time to look back to a powerful philosophy and old favourite of Mkt.'s for some simple wisdom.

Let us share with you the 'Fish Philosophy'...

It's not the type of fish you'd expect to catch in Port Phillip Bay. Or the kind of fish you might get served dipped in batter at the local fish and chip shop in St Kilda. Wind the clock back to the late 90s and documentary filmmaker John Christensen was shopping in Seattle when he heard loud cheering and happy voices.

Wanting to find out what was going on, he followed the sound and discovered a crowd surrounding a small fish market — the World-Famous Pike Place Fish. The story goes that “suddenly a fishmonger fired a slippery salmon to a co-worker, who made a spectacular one-handed catch as the crowd applauded. He invited a delighted customer to catch a fish.”*

“The positive energy was electric. The fishmongers greeted strangers like old friends. Despite the noise and bustle, when a fishmonger focused on serving a customer, it was as if they were the only two people in the world. Everyone was smiling—and buying lots of fish. John noticed that selling fish looked cold and exhausting, yet these fishmongers attacked their work with energy and engagement.

He wondered, “How do they do it?”*

John analysed what it was that made this such a unique workplace and from his findings developed the Fish Philosophy. Since then, thousands of businesses across the globe have adopted The Fish Philosophy and its simple principals.

Whilst COVID-19 by its very nature affects those infected physically, it's the mental toll of isolation and uncertainty that, in some ways, is far more concerning - so how can leaders respond?

We don't need to create more content, strategies or ideas, it seems we have over complicated so many things already.

We need to seek out simplicity and some basic principles that tap into the human condition and bring these to life in our workplaces. I think they tapped into something with these four practices and whilst the world has become considerably more complicated since 1997 – one thing hasn't changed...we're all human and could do with an old-fashioned dose of humanity.

The Four Practices of The FISH! Philosophy

Be There

Be emotionally present for people. It's a powerful message of respect that improves communication and strengthens relationships. If you are moving to a work from home strategy, think about how you can remain connected to your team and check-in on how they are doing each day. How can you facilitate moments of 'human connection' online?

Play

Tap into your natural way of being creative, enthusiastic and having fun. Play is the spirit that drives the curious mind, as in “Let's play with that idea!” You can bring this mindset to everything you do. As businesses are looking to adapt and respond to COVID-19, how can your team brainstorm new and different ways of working and supporting each other and your customers?

Make Their Day

Find simple ways to serve or delight people (your team, those around you and the local community) in a meaningful, memorable way. It's about contributing to someone else's life—not because you want something, but because that's the person you want to be. Kindness is king in times like this and can have a huge impact on curbing the mental toll.

Choose Your Attitude

Take responsibility for how you respond to what life throws at you. Are you taking care of yourself, emotionally, mentally and physically? How does that play into how you show up each day? Your choice affects others. Ask yourself: “Is my attitude helping my team or my customers? Is it helping me to be the person I want to be?”

* <https://www.fishphilosophy.com/>

Mkt.