

## SHARING LEARNING by Jan Rudge

### 'The Soul Sucking CEO/Leader'



I am a follower of the World Business and Executive Coaching Summit better known as WBECS; their mission is to raise the global standard of coaching across the world, bringing together top thought leaders in coaching worldwide.

In this edition of The Monthly Coach, I am sharing with you my top choice from 2021, an inspirational CEO Gary Ridge, who came to us with a tongue-in-cheek look at leadership in a company. Gary has been CEO at WD40 for more than 2 decades, and he shared with his audience how he has shaped WD40 to become not only a profitable brand leader across more than 40 countries with retention rates in the mid-nineties, but also a great place to work.

I loved this session! It's no surprise as Gary referred to leaders I have followed for many years like Ken Blanchard, Simon Sinek, Marshall Goldsmith and Peter Drucker!

Gary states that his greatest achievement in his 25 years as CEO is in creating a culture ***where people go to work every day and make a contribution greater than themselves.***

- Where they learn something new
- They feel safe
- They work to a compelling set of hierarchical values
- Employees go home happy

Their employee engagement statistic was 93% in 2021.

Gary commented "If CEOs are soul sucking, then their leadership behaviours will "kill people". He shared the concerning research as quoted by Hubert Joly in his book, 'The Heart of Business'. *"Disengagement at work is a global epidemic."*

19000 people in 19 countries were surveyed:  
16% were fully engaged at work; 8/10 merely show up for work.

*“This is a tragedy of unfulfilled potential, so much talent and drive is going untapped. Millions of people are being denied the chance to be inspired at work to thrive and be their very best.”*

Study after study confirms how engagement positively influences productivity, reduces employee turnover, increases (customer) satisfaction and profitability (results) It has also been shown to reduce workplace injuries.

**The survey showed that 67% did not like their boss or their job.**

A culture needs to support people in the organisation.

Disengagement costs greatly in financial terms through lost productivity.

Marshall Goldsmith in his book, “What Got You Here Won’t Get You There”, says such CEO/Leaders are judgemental, volatile and secretive.

1. **They know it all**, they reduce and shut down the curiosity in others. They consider themselves ‘corporate royalty.’ They have a big office, a parking spot, have lunch bought to them.
2. **They consider learning is for losers.** Gary says at WD40, they don’t have mistakes, they have *learning moments*. He quotes Nelson Mandela, *“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”*
3. **Ego eats empathy** instead of empathy eating ego. This CEO expresses no regrets. Gary says, *“Happy people create happy families, happy families create happy communities.”*
4. **He has all the answers:** He reduces passion and emotion by 50%, he does not help people to be successful.
5. **He always needs to win and to be right.** Even when winning doesn’t matter!
6. **There is fear-based culture.** He paralyses emotion and passion, versus Gary’s pragmatic optimism.
7. **Micromanagement is essential.** This is not scalable! It is the infrastructure and cultural norms that empower people.
8. **No follow through with their commitments.**
9. **They hate feedback...**they actively avoid it.
10. **They reduce the will of their people.**

Gary quotes Peter Drucker: *“Culture eats strategy for breakfast.”*

**WD40 is not just about selling oil.**

The values are the company drivers; the purpose is, ‘To make lasting memories in everything we do’.

- To make life better at home and at work.
- Pleasure in your work makes for perfection in the purpose.
- They call managers Performance Coaches...they praise and redirect from the side-line. They understand the game.

We applaud our people for doing great work, we re-direct consistently when they don't. Creating culture is simple but not easy. You have to attend to it every day.

***"People like us do things like this." – Seth Godwin***

## The Value of Values



They are hierarchical - you don't cherry pick the ones you like!

Gary comments: *"Profit is the applause you get from people doing great work."*

In the latest WD40 employee engagement survey 2020:

97% say they respect their boss

97% say they are excited about the company's future

97% say they know what is expected of them

