

# **The Five Things We Want You to Know**

by Cheryl Eckl, TotalPros Senior Trainer

## **1. Communication is at the heart of life and at the heart of commerce.**

In his book, *Crossing the Unknown Sea*, author David Whyte says that "every organization must keep several different conversations vital at once: A conversation with the unknown future gathering around their industry or their products. A conversation with their customers or the people they serve right now. And the conversation that occurs between those who actually work together in the organization. All these outer conversations depend upon an internal conversation that is occurring within each individual."<sup>1</sup>

I couldn't agree more. Companies in the 21st century must foster communication at all levels of the organization. And all members of the organization must possess a certain level of self-knowledge in order to communicate authentically.

## **2. Every person has unique gifts to bring to his or her work and is a genius at something.**

My experience teaching whole brain technology convinces me that each individual is not only unique, but uniquely talented in at least one area of work. That special work is what turns us on, motivates us and drives us throughout our lives to excel and contribute to our companies, families and communities.

Organizations that align people's jobs with their unique "turn-on" work will succeed beyond their expectations.

## **3. Work is where we make or break ourselves.**

Let's face it. We spend most of our time at work. It's where we get most of our social interaction, rewards and disciplines for our efforts. It's where we earn our living, gain the benefits that sustain us and our families, and most commonly deal with values issues.<sup>2</sup>

It's where we can have our greatest successes or our greatest failures. And it's where we face our greatest fears. Very often those fears center around the perceived danger of being ourselves, showing our vulnerabilities and allowing ourselves to follow our deepest desires for belonging through work.

## **4. We have a deep need to simplify our complex, busy, surface work and replace it with the work for which we are truly suited.**

David Whyte says it is human nature to want to give our companies the adaptability, vitality, imagination and enthusiastic willingness to go the extra mile they are asking for today. But we want to do it on our own terms.

The work we do must be, as Whyte says, "good work, done well for the right reasons and with an end in mind...Work that grants sense and meaning to the one doing it and to those affected by it."

**5. Companies that will succeed in the 21st century understand that their true wealth is not based on financial assets, but rather on the productivity of their people.**

Adam Smith promoted this idea several hundred years ago in his book *The Wealth of Nations*. Since then, countless revolutionary thinkers have put forth similar concepts in quality circles (Deming), participative leadership (Max DePree), job alignment (Drucker), learning organizations (DeGeus and Senge).<sup>3</sup> But the lure of big profits and demand for short-term results still drive American business.

We should ask: For how long? Increasingly, we believe, companies will find it easier to replace an investor than a passionate, productive employee with years of intellectual capital between his or her ears. Employees still are not equal partners in the daily conversation of business—but they should be.

As Ned Herrmann loved to say, "If your competitor has the same product and the same market, the creativity of your people is your greatest competitive advantage."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Whyte, David. *Crossing the Unknown Sea: Work as a Pilgrimage of Identity*. Riverhead Books, 2001.
  2. Gerwick-Brodeur, Madeline. "The Future of Work." [www.astro-cycles.com](http://www.astro-cycles.com), 2000.
  3. O'Toole, James. *Leading Change: The Argument for Values-based Leadership*. Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1995-6.
  4. Herrmann, Ned. *The Creative Brain*. The Ned Herrmann Group, 1995.