



Corporate Chaplaincy: The Missing Link in Business

By Steve Cook & Diane Hanson



Capital Chaplains

About Capital Chaplains

Capital Chaplains is a Madison, WI, based company that provides corporate chaplaincy for businesses. We provide the missing link in business by taking care of your greatest assets—your employees. If your employees are whole, they can give 100%.

We provide care and compassion to help employees to be complete—mind, body, and soul. We believe extending this kind of care improves people's lives AND improves human performance. When people are able to work through personal struggles in a confidential and supportive way, morale goes up, and performance draining conflicts and corporate cynicism go down. We incorporate a variety of means for caring in the workplace, including:

- Confidential Care Giving
- Crisis Intervention
- Ethics Training
- Coaching and Development
- Referral to other Professionals

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Life Is Hard... Then You Go to Work

We are all people before we are employees. As human beings, we all deal with personal challenges from time to time. From a diagnosis of cancer, to learning your spouse has not been faithful, to getting a call from your doctor that your pregnancy test is negative - again. When your alarm clock goes off the next day, you can either call in sick or bring it to work with you. Either way, it affects business, and it impacts those around you.

What Is the Best Way to Provide Help?

The good news is that 87% of employees said they would work harder for a company willing to help them with their personal problems (1), but what is the best way to help employees and their immediate families with the tough issues of life...

- Personal problems
- Debilitating illness
- Substance abuse
- A failing marriage
- Incarceration
- Thoughts of suicide
- Grief and loss

There are healthy boundaries that need to be in place between managers and workers. So what is an appropriate way for business owners or managers to respond in these difficult situations?



Traditional EAPs vs. Chaplaincy EAPs

A traditional employee assistance program (EAP) provides telephone based short term counseling and referral services. The service helps employees deal with personal problems that might adversely impact their work performance, health, and well-being. Traditional EAPs and Chaplaincy EAPs are similar in the sense that they both help employees deal with personal issues that affect job performance, but that's where the similarities end.

Chaplaincy EAPs Connect with Most – Traditional EAPs Serve Very Few.

Traditional EAPs have usage rates of 5% to 7% (2), while Chaplaincy EAP programs have usage rates of 55% to 95% (3). This is due to the relational nature of the service.

Chaplaincy EAPs are Based on Relationships – Traditional EAPs are Based on Technology.

Traditional EAPs are like calling tech support when you have a personal problem. When people are desperate enough they will call an 800 number and talk to a stranger about their problems, but most do not. Chaplaincy EAPs are based on relationship. They build relationships with people on a regular basis, so that when there is a problem, people are comfortable enough to confide in them.

Chaplaincy EAPs are Proactive – Traditional EAPs are Reactive. While traditional EAPs wait for the phone to ring, Chaplain EAPs are uncovering and solving the small issues before they become big issues.

Chaplaincy EAPs Help Transform Culture – Traditional EAPs Simply Solve Personal Problems. Traditional EAPs focus on helping people through their problems via phone as quickly as possible. In a Chaplaincy EAP, the corporate chaplain is not just helping solve personal problems, he/she is engaged with managers and staff, helping everyone communicate and work together more effectively – with less conflict and more collaboration. The result is a corporate culture where people stop blaming one another and start taking personal and team ownership of business challenges.

Chaplaincy EAPs can Deal Directly with Problems Managers Can't. Managers often see the warning signs of an employee in trouble, but cannot cross the boundaries of their boss-subordinate relationship. It may also be inappropriate for the manager to tell the employee to call the EAP for help. In cases like this, the corporate chaplain can address these issues in the natural course of the relationship she has with the employee.

What is Corporate Chaplaincy?

Many companies are discovering the human resource and bottom line benefits of having a corporate chaplain on premises and available by phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, in case of an emergency, crisis, or other need. Through a Chaplain based employee assistance program (or Chaplaincy EAP), employers can demonstrate that they care about those they lead.

A Corporate Chaplaincy EAP is a personal, voluntary, and confidential benefit available to employees and their households and immediate families. Sponsored by the company; chaplains are provided by a chaplaincy provider.

Features of a Chaplaincy EAP include:

- Benefits that are voluntary but available to all employees and their households and immediate family members who choose to participate
- Benefits at no cost to the employee
- Chaplains who are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year
- Chaplains who are neutral from company operations
- An assurance of confidentiality; personal information will not be revealed to management or any other person (except where dictated by law)

“All Studies Indicate EAPs are Cost Effective”

While Chaplaincy EAPs are clearly more cost effective; statistics shown here for traditional EAPs provide a solid case for Chaplaincy EAPs to build on: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports: “All of the published studies indicate that EAPs are cost-effective” (25). The U.S. Department of Labor reports that for every dollar invested in an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), employers generally save anywhere from \$5 to \$16 (26). EAPs can reduce sick leave usage by 33%, work-related accidents by 65%, workers’ compensation claims by 30%, lost time by 40%, and grievances by 50% (27). Goetzel, Juday, and Ozminkowski (1999) reviewed findings across 21 studies related to Return On Investment (ROI) conducted by employers and their EAP providers. All of the programs reported a positive ROI, ranging from \$1.49 to \$13 per dollar spent on the program. Mental health programs demonstrated one of the highest ROIs (28).

Company	ROI Ratio
Chevron (29)	\$14.00 : \$1.00
General Motors (30)	\$3.00 : \$1.00
L.A. Water & Power (31)	\$3.00 : \$1.00
McDonnell Douglas (32)	\$4.00 : \$1.00
Merrill Lynch (33)	\$13.00 : \$1.00
United Airlines (34)	\$16.95 : \$1.00

It’s Not About Religion; It’s About Improving Productivity

Because there is a spiritual component to a Chaplaincy EAP, there are some common misperceptions about this type of Employee Assistance Program. Chaplaincy is not about pushing religion in the workplace, it’s about personal care for people regardless of their personal values or religion. When employees get this kind of care, it builds emotional resilience in the organization, and as a result – higher productivity.

To a person of faith who invites a conversation about faith, a chaplain will talk about faith issues. When this invitation has not been made, a chaplain simply operates as a life coach – listening, encouraging, advising on practical matters, and helping the employee or family member deal with life’s pressures in a healthy way.

Also, because all conversations are private between the employee and the chaplain, employees tend to share struggles that they may not ever share with a spouse. When people are able to work through these kinds of challenges with a trusted, non-judgmental confidant, they are more productive at work and more successful in life.

Corporate chaplains follow the Guidelines on Religious Exercise and Religious Expression in the Federal Workplace. In 60 years of corporate chaplaincy, and over 6,000 (and growing) corporate chaplains nationwide, there has never been a court case contesting this institution.

What Every Good CFO Dreams About

A Chaplaincy EAP is more than just a good idea, it’s a business strategy that is almost certain to generate a return on investment. The financial case for a Chaplaincy EAP centers on three areas of measurable impact: Reduced “presenteeism” (low productivity) and absenteeism, reduced employee turnover, and reduced health and disability claims. When you look at Chaplaincy as an alternative to other corporate investments, considering opportunity costs, it’s hard to beat.



Reduced “Presenteeism” and Absenteeism

The majority of productivity improvements associated with EAPs tend to be seen in the reduction of “presenteeism” and absenteeism. Presenteeism, coming to work with your body, but leaving your heart and mind at home, accounts for the highest productivity losses in the workplace. In fact, research shows that presenteeism accounts for 80% of costs associated with lost productivity, while absenteeism accounts for the other 20% (4).

The most common mental health problem in the workplace is depression; it is also the disorder that has the most overall impact on job performance. In 1990, depressive disorders were estimated to cost employers \$43 billion per year (5). Data from a national survey of workforce disability leave also indicated that workers with depression take 10% more days off work than their non-depressed counterparts (6).

EAP programs like Corporate Chaplaincy have had a dramatic impact on both presenteeism and absenteeism. In one study of 7,000 employees, 88.5% of the employees who used an employee assistance program reported an improvement in their problems. The study found that over 403 work days were saved with the EAP that would have been lost without it (7).

EAP programs have also had a dramatic impact on absenteeism – even in smaller companies. In one example, a company of only 30 people calculated the absenteeism cost avoidance to be \$100,000 (8).

Reduce Employee Turnover

Estimates vary, but most agree that the costs associated with employee turnover are at least 50% to 150% of an employee’s annual salary(9). A Chaplaincy EAP can improve employee retention through direct intervention by a chaplain for employees at risk of voluntary or involuntary termination.

Mark Scott, Vice President of Marketing for Home Banc, attributes his company’s low turnover (14%, versus the 20% industry average) to employing a Chaplaincy EAP (10). A large regional Pizza Hut / Taco Bell franchise, Austaco, credits its Chaplain EAP with a reduction in annual employee turnover from 300% to 125% – unheard of for fast food companies (11). Allied Holdings, one of the largest trucking companies in the US, attributes its low employee turnover to its Chaplaincy EAP – less than 10% a year, compared to the industry average of 100% (12). Finally, Tim Embry, CEO of American LubeFast, reported that since he implemented the chaplaincy program, his employee turnover rate and product shrinkage (losses due to theft) declined dramatically. He described the Chaplaincy EAP as “an employee assistance plan on steroids” (13).



Reduced Health & Disability Claims

When people are able to resolve stress and emotional problems through an employee assistance program, they file fewer health claims. A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) study reported data from several studies and concluded that EAP programs are cost effective for such measures as reduction in sickness and accident benefits, mental healthcare costs, absenteeism, lost wages, and medical costs (14). A study at McDonnell Douglas indicated that their EAP was effective in lowering costs associated with medical claims, along with other issues such as absenteeism, and employee turnover (15). Finally, a large-scale study by Abbott Laboratories also reported lower total healthcare costs for employees who used their EAP compared to those who did not (16).

The International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans surveyed 185 benefit plan administrators about substance abuse services used by employees through an EAP (17). The results for those using an EAP speak for themselves:

- Reduced health plan costs for 66% of respondents
- Reduced disability costs for 49% of those surveyed
- Reduced workers' compensation costs for 41% of the respondents

Things Accountants Can't Measure – That Can Make or Break a Company

While much research has been done to calculate the return on investment for Traditional EAPs and Chaplaincy EAPs, there are many benefits that cannot be easily measured, that can make or break a company.

- **Saving Doomed Marriages and Desperate Lives.** Corporate chaplains have saved countless marriages from divorce. They have saved lives from planned suicides and in some cases have stopped workplace murders. These are things no one can put a price tag on.
- **Improved Service Among Employees Working with Customers.** Have you ever dealt with a customer service person who was having a bad day or hated his job? Chances are you would go out of your way to avoid dealing with that company the next time. Chaplaincy helps employees keep their moral up and process the stresses of life so their issues are not directed at your customers.

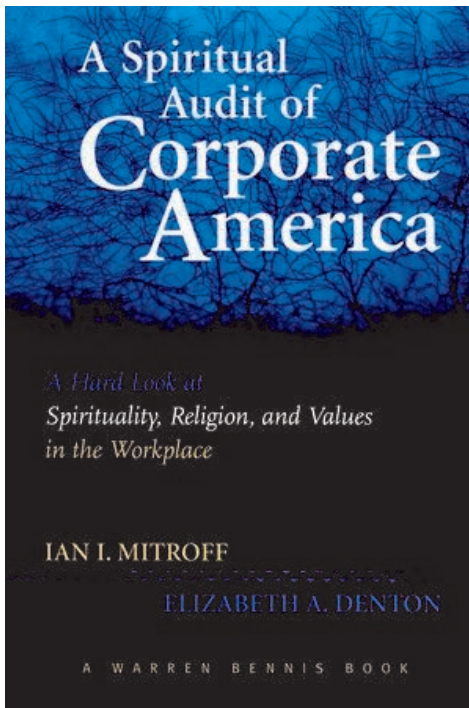


- **Reduced Conflict.** How many hours are lost to employee conflicts each month? What if there was someone from outside the organization who, when invited, could coach staff and management to relate to and communicate with one another in a healthier way? How much more work would get done?
- **Increased Management Effectiveness.** Many managers see the warning signs of an employee in need of help on a personal level, but cannot address these issues without crossing inappropriate boundaries. Chaplains can close this gap and address these critical issues.
- **Decreased Risk of Litigation.** A chaplain can help reduce the risk of litigation by diffusing heated situations and helping the employees involved to respond in an emotionally healthy way – potentially avoiding costly litigation.
- **Decreased Risk of Violence in the Workplace.** Over 10% of deaths in the workplace are murders and nearly two million people a year are victims of violence or threats in the workplace (18) Chaplains can play a key role in preventing workplace violence by helping people work through their stresses, depression, and/or workplace conflicts.

What America's CEOs Are Saying About Corporate Chaplaincy

Corporate chaplaincy is not just a great idea, it's a human capital strategy that works in companies from every industry – from small businesses to the Fortune 500.

- **Tyson Foods.** John Tyson, Chairman and CEO of Tyson Foods, says, "I have no doubt based on story after story as to the chaplain program's human and bottom-line value" (19).
- **Home Banc.** According to Patrick Flood, CEO of Home Banc, "People spend the majority of their working lives here, and I believe that if we recognize their needs and try to create a climate that makes them better people, the byproduct will be better, happier, and more productive associates" (20).
- **American LubeFast.** Tim Embry, the CEO of American LubeFast, said, "Starting our chaplaincy program was the best thing I have ever done in business" (21).



- **Coca-Cola Bottling** concluded that their chaplaincy program contributed to improvements in morale, productivity, safety, and quality. In fact, some employees actually offered to accept a reduction of benefits if that were necessary to keep the chaplaincy program afloat. Lauren Steele, VP of Corporate Affairs, at Coca-Cola, writes, “We recognized that we needed to try to deal with our employees as whole employees—bodies, mind, and soul. It’s been enthusiastically embraced by our employees, primarily because it’s completely nonintrusive” (22).

Robert Pettus, Vice Chairman of Coca-Cola, has studied the costs and benefits of a workplace chaplaincy program and concluded that they more than pay for themselves in terms of lower turnover, higher morale, and healthier staff. By way of example, Pettus shared that some union employees—who happened to be a group of single mothers—approached him and said that, if tough economic conditions meant the workplace chaplaincy program might have to get cut, they were willing to give up other benefits instead so as to keep that one. In thirty years of work in human relations, he had never heard such an offer (23).

The Difference Between “Good” and “Great” Is in the Soul

In the groundbreaking research chronicled in *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America: A Hard Look at Religion, and Values in the Workplace*, authors Ian Mitroff and Elizabeth Denton arrive at some surprising conclusions. According to the authors, the data strongly suggests that those organizations that have a greater sense of spirituality (i.e. Bring their souls to work, not just their minds) have employees who...

- are less fearful of their organizations.
- are far less likely to compromise their basic beliefs and values in the workplace,
- perceive their organizations as significantly more profitable.
- report that they can bring significantly more of their complete selves to work, specifically their creativity (24).

People can bring their minds and bodies to work, but when they bring their hearts and souls, greatness emerges. When you look at the totality of evidence from a human capital perspective and from a profitability perspective, corporate chaplaincy offers value on every level.



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Other helpful resources:

Division of Workplace Programs website:

<http://www.workplace.samhsa.gov/wpworkit/eap.html#r24>