

Stewarding the Children in Your Care



*“Joy can be found by choosing a path that contributes to the betterment of our world.” – **Bob Chapman***

Barry-Wehmiller is a company committed to building a better world through business. They seem to be doing a pretty good job.

Today the Barry-Wehmiller companies have total revenues of \$2.4B. How they achieved this level of success is an interesting story.

The company was founded in 1885 as a maker of machinery for the brewing industry. Bob Chapman was an accountant for Price Waterhouse (go accountants!) and joined the firm in 1969 at his father’s request. Chapman assumed control of the company after his father’s death in 1975. The bank pulled their loan that year and Chapman almost lost the company. But he persevered and grew the company to \$22M in revenues in 1976.

Since then, Chapman and his team have acquired over 80 organizations and brought them together under their leadership principles.

What are the leadership principles that have allowed BW to successfully grow at this pace while staying true to its vision of building a better world through business?

It all starts with an interesting story about when Chapman “saw the light” and began his journey towards what he calls, “Truly Human Leadership.”

Chapman was at a wedding in an idyllic location, enjoying the moment of the father giving his daughter’s hand in marriage. Chapman had already walked his daughters down the aisle so he knew what this father was thinking. What he was thinking was very different from what he said.

When the preacher asked who gives this woman to be married to this man, her father replied, “Her mother and I.” Chapman knew what the father was thinking. It was something like this - “Look here young man. We expect the two of you to be stewards of each other’s life. For both of you to become who God intended you to be. Do you understand that young man?”

Chapman's mind went to the 11,000 people that work in his organizations. He realized that each of these people was someone's precious child. He began to understand that, as the leader, he had been given the awesome responsibility to steward these precious children, to help them become who God created them to be.

These people are not "assets" to be used in the pursuit of organizational goals, but someone's precious child who has been placed in your care.

That moment completely changed Chapman's view of leadership. That moment was the beginning of Truly Human Leadership. Leadership that measures success by "the way we touch the lives of people."

Based on this view of leadership Chapman decided that the divorce rate of his employees would be a key performance indicator of the company's success. Chapman found that the most important factor in happiness for people was having a good job where they could grow and make a difference.

He asked his employees for ideas on how to improve the organization and engaged them in implementing their ideas. The employees became happier and more engaged. Happier and

engaged employees went home happier and became better spouses and parents.

I encourage you to check out a great 10-minute video on Chapman's leadership style. You can watch it here - <https://valuesdrivenresults.com/leadership-crisis-great-10-minute-video/>

We love helping leaders build great businesses. If you'd like to learn more you can check out our free resources at www.valuesdrivenresults.com/resource-library/ or give us a call at 229.244.1559. We'd love to help you in any way we can.

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