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## Bridges

A bi-monthly newsletter from Meridian Consulting, Inc.

*Building Bridges to Success*  
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### **In this issue:**

- **Featured Article:** *A Life of Membership*
  - **Book/Article Review:** *Now, Discover Your Strengths*
  - **Featured Bumper Sticker:** *Change is Inevitable, Growth is Optional*
  - **Featured Service:** *Consulting Services*
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### **Featured Topic:** *A Life of Membership*

If I were to suggest that we get together to write a "vision statement" you would probably groan. The process of "visioning" has gotten a bad reputation and there are probably a lot of good reasons for that. However, the fact remains, that whatever we think about, we lean towards. So whatever thoughts you hold have a very powerful and real impact on what you do and how it gets done.

So what is the vision you have for your life? Do you want a life of employment or a life of membership? Does this seem like a strange question to ask? Perhaps it is, but the difference between the two is profound. In a life of employment, you do what needs to be done. In a life of membership, you do what matters most.

In a life of employment, your job is a vehicle for getting what matters most. The problem with a life of employment is that you have to put limits on what matters most, because it has to fit in and around what has to be done. Your primary focus becomes one of "have to" as opposed to "want to." And when the "have to" expands and speeds up, it leaves you with less energy to invest in what matters most. This leaves you with weekends and time off the job to recharge yourself, do the chores that need to be done, and often last on the list is doing what matters the most. Unfortunately, what comes last on any list, rarely gets done.

In a life of membership, you are engaged in daily activities, doing what matters most. You do what needs to be done out of respect and caring for other members, your organizations and yourself. Accountability is internalized. In a life of employment, accountability is external and is externally enforced.

In a life of membership you always assume that the other people are acting in good faith. In a life of employment you need the structure to define and enforce agreements. In a life of membership, trust comes easy and is comforting in its

presence. In a life of employment trust is guarded and must be earned continuously, any deficit quickly eroding the accrued interest.

A life of membership is one of belonging, and it teaches you about membership in a way that allows you to build other viable memberships. In a life of membership you care about your relationships and are compelled by respect to resolve differences openly and directly. This process of resolution helps to build on the trust and creates clarity of agreement between the members. The resolution of differences becomes a method for building bridges and strengthening relationships. In a life of employment agreements must be documented and enforced, with differences becoming a matter of record and procedure. Differences build new policies, further eroding and inhibiting any opportunity for membership.

In a life of membership, you are open to the influence of others because it is the ability to blend the differences that strengthens the membership. And through this blending you are able to embrace change. In a life of employment, change is resisted and often mandated, relying on coercion and manipulation as the primary implementation strategies. In a life of membership, you have influence over the whole and through that influence you help to empower and encourage change in the form of growth and learning.

It is entirely up to you, both membership and employment are available, the choice is yours. You do not have to settle for employment if your heart desires membership. You do not have to be the victim of circumstance, you can create your own reality and in so doing you will influence others to do the same.

Everyday, your actions and words either demonstrate your commitment to membership or reinforce the concept of employment. You are in the position to make a difference and be the model that inspires others. In his book [Soul of A Citizen](#), Paul Loeb said,

*"If we want our children to lead lives of commitment and compassion, they're going to need tangible examples of people who act on their convictions with courage and integrity."*

Be the change you want to see. By demonstrating your commitment to membership through what you do and say, you provide a model that allows others to envision what is possible.

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**Book Review: "Now, Discover Your Strengths"**

*By Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D.*

*"Unfortunately, most of us have little sense of our talents and strengths, much less the ability to build our lives around them. Instead...we become experts in our weaknesses and spend our lives trying to repair these flaws, while our strengths lie dormant and neglected."*

Based upon the extensive research of the *Gallup Organization*, the authors offer a perspective that each of us is perfectly suited to be who we are, with talents that are enduring and unique. The book shows you how to discover your talents, turn them into strengths, and acquire the ability to build your life around them.

Having the ability to understand who we are from a positive perspective, gives us the opportunity to begin to explore the ways we can leverage those talents and strengths into everyday reality. The research shows that each person's greatest room for growth is in the areas of his/her greatest strength.

Along with the purchase of the book, you obtain the right to go on-line and take a personal "strengths inventory" that gives definition to who you are and what talents and strengths you currently possess. When you have this knowledge, you can find or carve out a role that draws on these strengths every day. Enjoy!

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**Featured Service: *Consulting Services***

**Business is a uniquely human endeavor;  
it is conducted by people, between people and for people.**

Today, more than ever before, your business success is defined by the collaborative response. As organizations become flatter and more open, you must *have the strategic involvement and dedication of every person*. Your results rely upon the degree and the quality of the effort of individual performers and their ability to manage themselves in ways that contribute to the success of the whole.

Imagine the power of a fully engaged workforce. This workforce displays a sense of shared ownership with each person acting as a steward of the organizations integrity, reputation, and results. When you create an environment of **authentic participation**, you will:

- Witness a more satisfied, flexible and productive workforce.
- Realize lower turnover rates and absenteeism.
- Observe an increase in individual motivation and commitment.
- Behold the emergence of leaders at every level.
- Observe an increase in personal accountability and shared responsibility.
- Watch as a sense of renewal and commitment takes hold.



Innovative Ideas  
Creative Solutions

***"Things do not happen. Things are made to happen." John F. Kennedy***

At Meridian, we are committed to helping you make this a reality. Call us today to find out how we can help your organization and the people in it, move from what is, to what it could be through authentic *participation* and sustained *collaboration*.

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