Talent and Culture: Rungs to Success

BY BRIAN YANOFCHICK, M.A.

Earlier this year, the Institute for Corporate Productivity (I4CP), in partnership with Human Resource Executive, published an updated report on what elements contribute most to high performance in organizations. The study examined the influence of strategy, leadership, talent, market and culture in an organization's success. This issue's theme, the Catholic health care workplace, highlights two of those factors: talent and culture.

In terms of talent, the study reported five statements that describe high-performance organizations:

■ Our employees are highly engaged
■ We are able to retain our most talented employees
■ Our compensation and reward system support employee performance
■ Our organization's processes and policies support talent management
■ We have a well-integrated talent management system

The study also identified the top three traits that employees at high-performing organizations share: a passion for work, a positive attitude toward peers and customers and a desire to set and achieve goals. This research should tell us that high-performing organizations do more than hire people with the right job skills. They employ people who are passionate about and committed to their work. Among other qualities, these traits of engagement nicely describe the kind of people whom we want to work in a ministry of the church.

In terms of culture, highly engaged employees of high-performance organizations reported they perceive a workplace culture that allows their organization to regard change positively and respond quickly to embrace new opportunities. In terms of our ministry, our *Health Progress* authors observe that the context of the current economy and the prospects of health care reform require a resilient, agile culture if we are to continue our service into the future.

Also in this issue, contributors reflect on the challenges of managing talent and developing a supportive culture. Trends tell us that we are facing fierce competition for primary care doctors, nurses and others. Questions to consider include: What incentives must we provide in order to attract and keep the right talent that will address the needs of our communities? How do we keep the talent we have, especially as we ask more of our staffs?
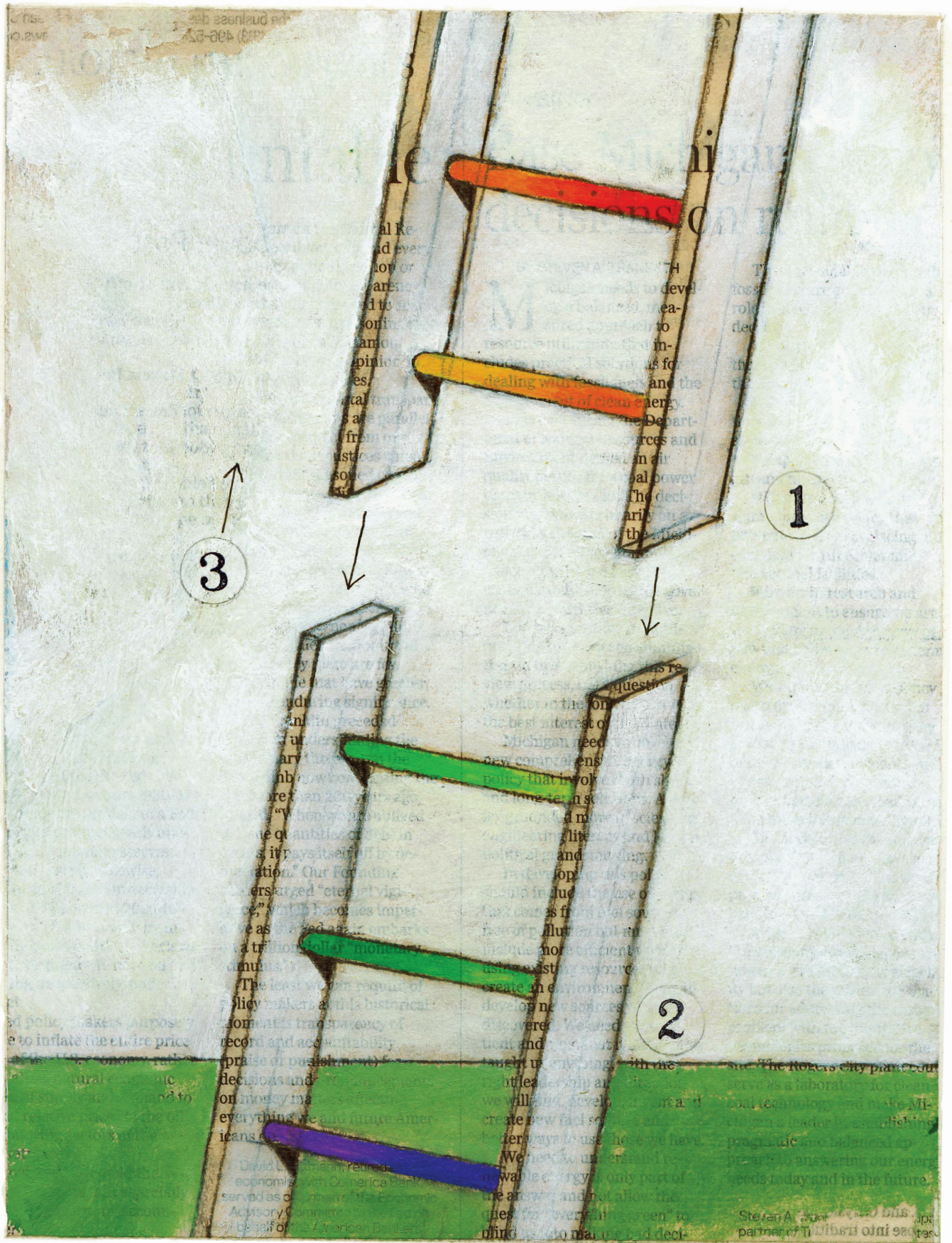
What's more, as our business environment changes around us, we are also seeing changes in the nature of the workforce. Generational differences are surfacing as younger people enter the job market with different priorities related to work/life balance. Is attempting to balance the expectations of several generations good, bad or just different? What strategies will enable us to successfully manage and blend employees from different age groups?

Justice is a signature value for the health care ministry, applying not only to our care for the poor and underserved but also to the ways we act with co-workers and the standards we set for behavior. Writers address the ongoing challenges of creating a workplace where trust between staff and management is strong, especially where unions are a factor in that relationship. They also consider how to successfully root our commitments to safety and quality outcomes in our understanding of justice and ethical practice. As a ministry, we understand these issues less as external requirements and more as an expression of our Catholic identity. Our challenge, then, is to harness the strength of our mission and values to create a culture committed to high performance in safety and quality.

Contributors to this issue address in general terms and in specific practice how they are shaping their workplaces so that Catholic health care now and in the future will continue to keep the promises it makes to our communities. We hope their insights will offer something new for you to think about and affirm what is best about your own workplace.

HEALTH PROGRESS®