

Joe Buda

Making a difference matters to Joe Buda. Early in his college days at Sacred Heart University, Joe was disturbed by social inequities. At that time, he set a goal to impact these injustices, and start in the workplace. In each position, Joe found a way to empower his co-workers, employees and teams.

Joe graduated from college during the post-Vietnam recession. He altered his initial vision of his career to secure employment. He accepted a position at Sikorsky Aircraft as an assembler trainee. His first assignment was on the Blackhawk major assembly line, working off the recently introduced Aircraft Operation Sheets (AOS). Quickly his mechanical aptitude and can-do spirit set him apart and he began to work on the first Blackhawk helicopter that was moving down the massive high bay in the Stratford, CT factory. The helicopter factory was an open shop and as an hourly employee Joe signed-up to be a member of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. There he heard the struggles of the hourly employee and renewed his passion for equity in the workforce.

Joe led a team of top-notch aircraft installers and assemblers on second then the third shift as a swat team for the next two years. As the youngest production-line foreman, he empowered his team and they out-performed other work groups. This team ensured that the assembly line could move the following morning. Soon, Joe was promoted again.

After five years of intense production line experience, Joe faced three career choices: stay on the final assembly in the High Bay area with aspirations of becoming a Production Manager, join the Strategic Planning department or become a member of the expanding labor relations team in the Personnel Department, later to be known as the Human Resource Department. Joe

followed his initial dream and switched his career trajectory and joined the labor relations team. Then, he completed his master's degree in Industrial Relations at the University of New Haven, and moved into the role of Labor Relations Center Manager.

Ten years' experience in the aircraft industry, prepared Joe to take a position in California with Otis Elevator. In the newly created Field Employee Relations Manager position, he covered Colorado and all states to the west including Alaska and Hawaii. While working in the Regional Office, overlooking Pier 39 in San Francisco, Joe mastered organization excellence in a decentralized environment. In the branch offices, Joe coached field mechanics and the field supervisor to work collaboratively, and eventually semi-autonomously. Thus, the first self-directed work team was formed. Quickly, other branch managers saw the power of the synergy these teams had and wanted the same in their corner of the world. Self-directed work teams helped accelerate production results while fostering a workplace with meaning and dignity. Just what Joe set out to accomplish.

His West Coast initiatives prepared Joe for his promotion to Director of Human Resources for Otis Canada. There he gained a deeper understanding of more areas of Human Resource management. Soon, the President of Otis Canada asked him to implement high performing work teams at the branch and regional level.

High-performing work teams ignited Joe's passion because they created a workforce in which employees found meaning in their work and engaged their minds and hearts----not just their hands. Production increased and so did the workforce morale. To make these teams successful, Joe partnered with line management and quality departments. And Joe and Gary joined forces. Joe's understanding of engaging workforces, and Gary's knowledge of quality made them a powerful duo.

Together they developed a team implementation strategy and designed many of the tools and techniques shared in this book. The successful application of these tools were refined and updated over the years, and then again prior to this publication.

Three years passed and Joe was promoted again to Otis World Headquarters in Connecticut as the Director of Human Resource Programs. Later he became the Director of Global Leadership and Development. There, Joe designed and implemented major global initiatives most notably a Global Learning Organization focused on developing high-potential employees.

Fostering empowered teams remains a passion for Joe. He knows that equity in the workplace is a way of encouraging diversity and acceptance in society at large. Together, Joe and Gary share their combined experiences and ways to transform other organizations. In this book, insights and lessons learned from their journeys are shared. Explore their sea of learning with them.

Joe Buda is the author of four books.

Double book publication: Pilgrims' Passage: Into a New Millennium & Pilgrims' Passage: Rebuilding the Past

Pilgrims' Passage: Darkness to Light

Pilgrims' Passage: Brave World