

Love at Work: The Strategic Imperative for Human-Centered Business in the Intangible Economy

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A White Paper Synthesizing Research and Practice

Executive Summary

This white paper presents a synthesis of research and practitioner insights demonstrating that “love at work”—defined as systematic organizational practices that foster deep understanding, professional intimacy, and authentic care—is not merely a cultural aspiration but an economic imperative in today’s intangible asset economy.



Key Findings

- **Economic Significance:**
Intangible assets now comprise 92% of S&P 500 market value (Ocean Tomo, 2025), making the quality of human relationships a primary driver of enterprise value
- **Performance Impact:**
Companies with high employee satisfaction generate 2.3-3.8% higher annual stock returns (Edmans, 2011), while firms practicing stakeholder-centered management significantly outperform market averages (Sisodia et al., 2014)
- **Engagement Crisis:** Despite decades of focus, only 30-33% of employees are truly engaged (Gallup), representing massive untapped potential and significant value destruction
- **Measurable Frameworks:**
Irrational Capital's Human Capital Factor (HCF) demonstrates that people practices are now quantifiable and investable, with Harbor Capital launching ETFs based on these metrics
- **Implementation Gap:** While leaders intellectually understand these concepts, systematic implementation remains rare, creating competitive advantage for early adopters

Recommendations

Organizations seeking to operationalize love at work should:

1. Reframe employee experience as a balance sheet issue, not an HR initiative
2. Implement systematic listening mechanisms with closed feedback loops at all organizational levels
3. Develop frontline managers in emotional intelligence and values-aligned leadership
4. Measure care through leading indicators (engagement, psychological safety) and lagging indicators (turnover, performance, customer satisfaction)
5. Commit to 18-24 month cultural transformation timelines with visible leadership accountability

This paper synthesizes insights from academic research, practitioner experience, and longitudinal case studies to provide both theoretical foundation and practical pathways for implementation.

Introduction: The Provocation



The Uncomfortable Word

In February 2025, when we began researching love at work, we anticipated resistance. The word “love” in business contexts triggers discomfort, skepticism, and concerns about professionalism. Executives worry it’s too soft, too personal, too risky. Yet what emerged through our year-long exploration was striking: every leader we spoke with—from valuation experts to data scientists, from Chief People Officers to organizational psychologists—immediately understood what we meant. More importantly, they had evidence that it matters. The discomfort with the word “love” reflects a deeper tension: between the way we’ve traditionally managed businesses (as machines optimized for efficiency) and the reality of how value is actually created in the 21st century (through human creativity, collaboration, and commitment).

The Business Imperative

Three forces converge to make love at work not just relevant but essential: First, the fundamental shift in asset composition. When 92% of market value derives from intangibles—people, ideas, relationships, reputation, brand—the quality of human connection becomes a first-order strategic concern. Second, the persistent engagement crisis. Despite billions invested in engagement initiatives, two-thirds of employees remain disengaged, representing massive value destruction and unrealized potential. Third, the emergence of measurement frameworks. For the first time, the previously “soft” dimensions of organizational life are quantifiable, comparable, and investable through tools like Irrational Capital’s Human Capital Factor.

Purpose and Scope

This white paper synthesizes: - Academic research on companionate love, employee satisfaction, and firm performance - Practitioner frameworks from thought leaders in people analytics, organizational development, and valuation - Longitudinal case studies demonstrating measurable impact - Implementation pathways for organizations at various stages of maturity. Our goal is to provide both intellectual foundation and practical guidance for leaders seeking to operationalize love at work as a strategic priority.



The Economic Context: Rise of the Intangible Economy

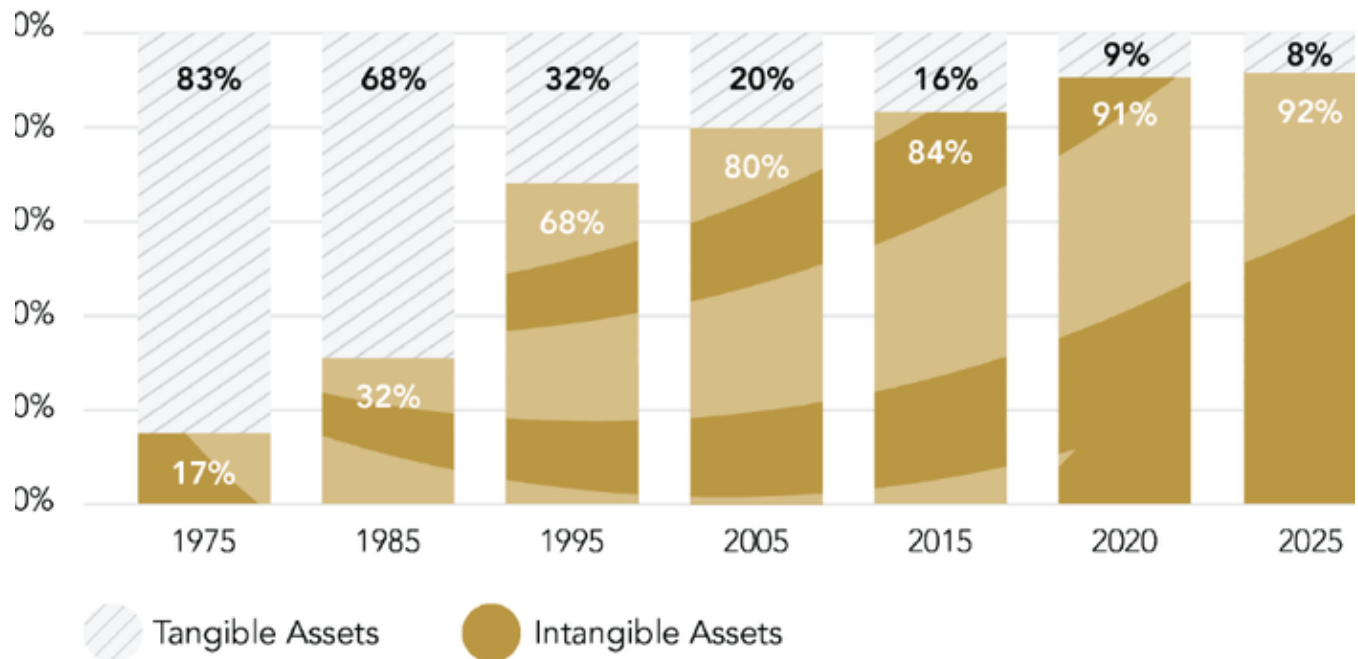
The Asset Composition Transformation

Ocean Tomo's 2025 analysis of S&P 500 components reveals a profound shift: **1975: 17% intangible assets, 83% tangible assets.** 1995: 68% intangible assets, 32% tangible assets. 2015: 84% intangible assets, 16% tangible assets. **2025: 92% intangible assets, 10% tangible assets.** This transformation fundamentally alters what creates and sustains enterprise value.

Implications for Value Creation

When value resides primarily in intangibles, traditional management paradigms become inadequate. You cannot optimize human creativity the way you optimize a manufacturing process. You cannot command innovation or mandate engagement. The COVID-19 pandemic crystallized this reality.

COMPONENTS of S&P 500 MARKET VALUE



SOURCE: OCEAN TOMO, A PART OF J.S. HELD, INTANGIBLE ASSET MARKET VALUE STUDY, 2025

As Bookbinder notes: “Everyone saw that your most valuable assets go home at the end of the day. You want to give them a reason to come back.” That “reason to come back” is what love at work provides.

The Cost of Capital Connection

From a financial perspective, the relationship between people practices and enterprise value operates through cost of capital. Bookbinder explains: “Companies that do right by their people enjoy a lower cost of capital. In valuation, enterprise value equals the present value of future economic benefits discounted at the cost of capital. All else equal, a lower cost of capital means a higher valuation. That’s just math.” This isn’t sentiment—it’s the fundamental valuation equation. When organizations create environments where people thrive, they reduce risk (lower turnover, higher retention, stronger culture), which translates directly to lower cost of capital and higher enterprise value.

The Investable Revolution

Irrational Capital has operationalized these insights through their Human Capital Factor (HCF), a granular measure of how companies treat their people across multiple dimensions: employee satisfaction and engagement; diversity, equity, and inclusion practices; development and growth opportunities; compensation and benefits structure; work-life integration support; health and safety conditions. Harbor Capital launched ETFs using HCF to identify companies likely to outperform based on people practices. For the first time, love at work is literally investable—portfolio managers can allocate capital based on how well companies care for their people, with the expectation of superior returns. This represents a fundamental market validation: the quality of human relationships is not just culturally important but economically measurable and financially material.

Segues and Scene-Setting

As the economic landscape shifts toward intangibles, leaders must adopt a new language and operating model. The next section defines what “love at work” means in concrete terms so that it can be taught, measured, and scaled.



Defining Love at Work: Frameworks and Constructs

Moving Beyond Euphemisms

Organizations have long used euphemisms for love: engagement, culture, care, belonging, psychological safety. While each captures an important dimension, none fully expresses the depth of connection required in high-performing organizations. Yet some pioneering leaders have dared to make love explicit. Claude Silver, Chief Heart Officer at VaynerMedia, represents a revolutionary approach to organizational leadership. Her role—created by CEO Gary Vaynerchuk in 2014—makes emotional health and human connection an executive-level priority. Silver’s work centers on creating a culture where employees feel seen, heard, and valued, demonstrating that love at work isn’t just philosophical but operationally central to one of the world’s leading digital agencies. The existence of a C-suite “Chief Heart Officer” signals a fundamental shift: love at work is moving from fringe concept to strategic imperative. Dr. Katie Desiderio, professor of management and co-author of *The Beekeeper* and *The Stargazer*, articulates why the specific word matters: “We’ve been socially primed to consider work separate from emotion. But if people aren’t emotional about their work—whether it’s making ice cream, putting together a helicopter, or serving a customer—they’re probably in the wrong seat.”

The LOVE Framework

Desiderio offers an elegant operational definition through the acronym LOVE:

L - Listen to Understand: shifting from listening to respond to listening to understand; ending sentences with question marks rather than periods; avoiding assumptions and seeking alignment between intention and impact; embodying the “platinum rule.”

O - Openness: opening eyes, ears, mind, and heart; cultivating growth mindset; rewiring associations (conflict as opportunity, not threat); practicing “lens check moments.”

V - Values-Driven Leadership: leading with clearly articulated personal core values; creating alignment between personal and organizational values; building environments that welcome emotional authenticity; understanding that emotional responses signal value conflicts.

E - Emotional Intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, empathy, and motivation. This framework moves love from abstract aspiration to concrete behavioral practice.

Professional Intimacy

Patricia Bravo, founder of Bravo For You and empathy strategist, introduces “professional intimacy” as the depth of understanding that enables effective leadership: “Professional intimacy is about accurately identifying cues and clues to activate understanding. That understanding runs along a continuum from shallow to deep. The depth really changes and transforms how people are actually working together.” Key aspects: not friendship; strategic understanding; the platinum rule in action; boundaries matter.

Radical Candor: Care Plus Challenge

Anthony Onesto, former Chief People Officer and current product executive at 15Five, grounds love at work in Kim Scott’s Radical Candor framework: caring personally while challenging directly. The Radical Candor matrix reveals four quadrants: 1) Radical Candor (care personally + challenge directly), 2) Ruinous Empathy, 3) Obnoxious Aggression, 4) Manipulative Insincerity. Love at work requires both dimensions. Caring without challenging creates toxic niceness where people don’t grow. Challenging without caring creates toxic performance cultures where people burn out.

Data-Driven Care

Dr. Fiona Jamison, Managing Director at PeopleResults, provides the empirical foundation: “Love at work means showing up and demonstrating care for your employees. It means demonstrating respect, listening, establishing trust, creating safe spaces for employees to raise their concerns and issues. It’s about making sure employees are seen and heard.” Her work reveals care in details: clean bathrooms, safe equipment, posted schedules, response to feedback, career conversations. When absent, employees interpret it as lack of care—and they leave.



Synthesis: A Working Definition

Integrating these frameworks, we define love at work as: A systematic organizational practice characterized by deep understanding (professional intimacy), authentic care demonstrated through both support and honest feedback (radical candor), values alignment, emotional intelligence, and commitment to treating individuals according to their unique needs (platinum rule)—resulting in measurable improvements in engagement, performance, and enterprise value. This definition is simultaneously behavioral, strategic, measurable, and scalable.

The Research Foundation: Companionate Love and Firm Performance

Companionate Love: The Academic Construct

The late Sigal Barsade, Wharton professor and pioneering researcher on emotions in organizations, defined companionate love in the workplace as feelings of affection, compassion, caring, and tenderness for one another. In her seminal 2014 study with Olivia A. O’Neill, “What’s Love Got to Do with It?” Barsade found: companionate love cultures were associated with greater employee satisfaction; higher teamwork; lower burnout and absenteeism; and client outcomes improved—patients in high-love units had better mood, quality of life, fewer emergency room visits, and fewer hospitalizations. These effects persisted even after controlling for job satisfaction, leader-member exchange quality, and organizational commitment.

Firms of Endearment: Stakeholder-Centered Performance

Raj Sisodia, Jag Sheth, and David Wolfe’s research in Firms of Endearment examined companies that operated with conscious capitalism principles—including genuine care for all stakeholders. Their findings: these firms outperformed the S&P 500 by 10.5x over 15 years, achieving superior performance while paying employees well, treating suppliers fairly, and caring deeply about communities. The performance advantage stems from higher employee engagement, stronger brand loyalty, more resilient supplier relationships, and enhanced innovation.

Employee Satisfaction and Stock Returns

Alex Edmans’s longitudinal research found that a value-weighted portfolio of the “100 Best Companies to Work For in America” earned an annual four-factor alpha of 3.5%. This outperformance was statistically significant and economically large. Employee satisfaction predicted future stock returns, suggesting the market undervalues intangible assets related to employee well-being, which in turn ties to higher productivity, lower turnover, stronger customer relationships, and enhanced reputation.

Behavioral Economics and Irrational Value

Dan Ariely's work reveals that meaning, recognition, autonomy, mastery, and purpose often drive performance beyond compensation. Irrational Capital operationalizes these insights through their Human Capital Factor, showing that companies with high HCF scores outperform on multiple financial metrics. People practices predict future stock performance, and the market systematically undervalues companies with strong human capital management—creating investment opportunity and validating the business case for love at work.

The Engagement-Performance Link

Gallup's decades of research show 41% lower absenteeism, 24% lower turnover in high-turnover industries, 70% fewer safety incidents, 21% higher profitability, and 17% higher productivity in high-engagement organizations. Yet engagement remains ~33% globally. The implementation gap represents both massive value destruction and significant competitive opportunity.

Psychological Safety and Team Performance

Google's Project Aristotle identified psychological safety as the single most important factor in team effectiveness. Teams with high psychological safety share information more freely, take appropriate risks, acknowledge mistakes and learn faster, generate more innovative solutions, and perform at higher levels. Psychological safety—the belief that one can speak up without negative consequences—is fundamentally an expression of love at work.

Research Synthesis

The academic literature provides overwhelming evidence: 1) Companionate love is real and measurable. 2) It improves both employee and end-user outcomes. 3) It predicts superior financial performance. 4) It operates through behavioral mechanisms. 5) It creates psychological conditions for high performance. 6) It is systematically undervalued by markets, creating competitive advantage. The question is no longer whether love at work matters, but how to implement it systematically.

Practitioner Insights: Implementation Realities

Three overlapping heart shapes made of light-colored paper are arranged on a dark background. The hearts are slightly offset from each other, creating a sense of depth. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

The Unlearning Imperative

A consistent theme across practitioner conversations: implementation requires unlearning before learning. Unlearning the Golden Rule: treat others as they want to be treated—shifting from telling to asking, from assuming to discovering, from standardization to customization, from efficiency to effectiveness. Unlearning 9-to-5: adopting work-life integration. Unlearning that emotions don't belong: reframing emotions as data that can create value.

The Frontline Manager Imperative

Frontline managers are the critical leverage point. Organizations often promote top individual contributors without preparing them to lead people. The solution: rigorous development in listening, developmental feedback, difficult conversations, expectation-setting, values alignment, and customization. Case evidence from a food manufacturer shows measurable improvements in engagement, safety, turnover, and operational performance after frontline manager training.

Systematic Listening: The Foundation

Love at work requires systematic listening. Jamison's listening architecture includes annual census surveys, pulse surveys, focus groups, exit and stay interviews, and open feedback channels. But listening without action is worse than not listening. Closing the feedback loop requires sharing results, developing action plans at multiple levels, tracking progress with leading and lagging indicators, communicating what changed, and iterating.

The 18–24 Month Reality

Bookbinder emphasizes that cultural transformation requires 18–24 months to prove seriousness. Employees watch for leadership behavior change, consequences for violations, action on feedback, resource allocation, and promotion criteria that recognize values-aligned behavior. Visible stakes—like a “no-assholes” policy—signal boundaries and resolve.

Internal Benchmarking


Shift from external to internal benchmarks by comparing your lowest and highest-rated leaders. This proves improvement is possible within your context, identifies internal exemplars, and yields concrete practices to scale. It builds on existing strengths rather than importing foreign models.

The Three Essential Questions

In moments of stress and change, leaders can embody professional intimacy with three questions: 1) How are you doing? 2) What are you working on? 3) How can I support you? These take minutes to ask but can transform trust and performance.

Self-Love as Foundation

Leaders cannot love their teams if they don't love themselves. Start with self-awareness of core values and triggers, energy management, boundaries, and modeling of work-life integration. When leaders model self-love, organizations embrace whole-person well-being.



The Data Imperative: Making Love Measurable

From Soft to Quantified

People practices were once dismissed as soft. Today, they're quantifiable. Leading indicators include engagement scores, psychological safety, manager effectiveness, development perceptions, values alignment, and inclusion metrics. Lagging indicators include early turnover, retention, absenteeism, safety incidents, promotion rates, performance distributions, customer satisfaction, and operational measures like shrink. The correlation between leading and lagging indicators creates predictive capacity.

Predictive Turnover Modeling

Using historical data, organizations can identify at-risk employees and intervene with stay interviews, anniversaries, and career conversations. The ROI is straightforward: replacing an employee costs 1.5–2x salary, and targeted interventions typically yield 5–10x returns by reducing attrition.

Segment-Based Analysis

Apply marketing segmentation to your workforce: champions, solid contributors, quietly struggling, and actively disengaged. Tailor strategies to each segment—leverage champions as ambassadors, provide growth for contributors, proactively support strugglers, and manage exits respectfully when necessary.

The 50-Point Spread

A 50-point engagement spread inside one organization proves local leadership trumps policy. Study high-performing managers to codify and scale their practices. This internal variation is your strongest proof of possibility and your richest source of practical playbooks.

The Care-Performance Link

Empirical links repeatedly show: a 10-point engagement improvement can reduce early turnover by ~8%; high manager effectiveness aligns with lower shrink; top-quartile psychological safety correlates with fewer safety incidents; values alignment predicts higher customer satisfaction. Track these correlations over time to demonstrate that care creates value.

Beyond “Better Than Average”

External benchmarks can enable complacency. If 52% engagement is “above average,” nearly half your workforce is still disengaged. Set aspirational targets based on your internal best performers and pursue continuous improvement.

Human Capital Factor: The Investable Metric

Irrational Capital’s HCF aggregates employee reviews, survey data, diversity and safety records, and benefits information to form an investable score. Harbor Capital’s ETFs built on HCF demonstrate that love at work is measurable and financially material, closing the loop from cultural aspiration to capital allocation.



Critical Success Factors: What Works and Why

Leadership Commitment Over Time

Sustained visible commitment for 18–24+ months—behavior change, resource allocation, promotion decisions, consequences for violations, and consistent messaging—builds trust. Evidence includes leaders sharing vulnerability, budgets for people development, exiting toxic high performers, values-aligned all-hands, and recognition systems.

Frontline Manager Development

Ongoing training in active listening, developmental feedback, difficult conversations, customization, emotional intelligence, and values alignment. Watch for rising manager effectiveness, shrinking engagement variance, and skip-level trust signals.

Systematic Listening With Action

Use multiple listening mechanisms and close the loop visibly. Success indicators: strong participation, action plans at every level, “you said, we did” communications, shorter time from feedback to action, and rising trust in leadership.

Internal Benchmarking and Best Practice Transfer

Identify internal exemplars and transfer their methods. Track decreasing variance, documented playbooks, communities of practice, targeted interventions, and upward movement of the bottom quartile.

Values Alignment and Authenticity

Choose values you will defend at a cost. Recruit and promote for alignment. Use values to resolve conflicts and guide decisions. Expect rising pride in mission and purpose.

Measurement and Accountability

Define leading and lagging indicators, review them regularly, tie compensation to people metrics, and share results transparently. Over quarters, expect visible improvement trajectories and stronger predictive links.

Customization to Individual Needs

Operationalize the platinum rule through flexible work, tailored development plans, choice-based recognition, diverse career paths, and feedback indicating employees feel seen.

Psychological Safety and Healthy Conflict

Encourage candid debate, normalize learning from mistakes, invite ideas from all levels, and resolve conflicts constructively. Indicators include more constructive disagreement, public learning moments, and thriving ideation.



Common Pitfalls: When Love Goes Wrong

Toxic Niceness: Ruinous Empathy

Caring without challenge leads to stagnation. Reframe candid feedback as an act of love that enables growth. Implement Radical Candor training and role-play difficult conversations to build muscle.

Over-Responding: Empathy Exhaustion

Empathy is understanding; response is a choice. Set boundaries to avoid burnout and maintain sustainable support. Leaders can acknowledge feelings while upholding standards and commitments.

Listening Without Action

Collecting feedback without visible change erodes trust. Prioritize ruthlessly, act on the top issues, and communicate what changed and why. Limit survey breadth to what you can address within a cycle.

Values Hypocrisy

Stated values without lived behaviors destroy credibility. Choose authentic values, make hard decisions aligned with them, and exit violators regardless of performance. Publicly connect decisions to values to reinforce norms.

Program-of-the-Month Syndrome

Culture change takes years, not quarters. Maintain leadership continuity, integrate love at work into operating rhythms, and resist initiative churn that breeds cynicism.

One-Size-Fits-All Approaches

Uniform policies often miss diverse needs. Offer choice in benefits, scheduling, recognition, and development. Measure equity of outcomes, not equality of inputs.

Focusing Only on Engagement Scores

Avoid gaming metrics. Treat engagement as a diagnostic that points to practices requiring change. Tie rewards to behaviors and leading indicators rather than raw scores.

Neglecting Self-Love

Leaders who neglect their own well-being cannot sustain care for others. Institutionalize recovery practices, normalize boundaries, and include well-being goals in performance plans.

A person wearing a teal dress and dark teal shoes is walking away from the camera on a path marked with white lines on asphalt. The path leads towards the background, and the person's legs and feet are the primary focus of the image.

The Path Forward: Strategic Implementation

Assessment: Where Are You Now?

Begin with a candid assessment across culture and values, leadership practices, manager capabilities, listening systems, measurement and accountability, and employee experience. Ask: Are values lived? Are managers equipped? Do employees trust that their voice leads to action? Do leading indicators predict lagging outcomes? Where are pockets of excellence and pain?

Strategy: Design Your Approach

Design a multi-year plan: Vision and Values (months 1–3); Leadership Alignment (1–6); Manager Development (3–12, ongoing); Listening Architecture (1–6, ongoing); Measurement System (1–6, ongoing); Communication Strategy (ongoing). Define what love at work means in your context and set aspirational targets.

Implementation: Execute With Discipline

Sequence execution for momentum and durability. Quick wins (1–6): close obvious care gaps, stabilize schedules, launch stay interviews, open feedback channels, recognize values-aligned behavior. Foundation building (3–12): manager training, listening systems, measurement infrastructure, values integration, best practice discovery. Cultural embedding (12–24): hire and promote for values, tie compensation to people outcomes, systematize recognition, share stories. Continuous improvement: keep evolving after year two.

Key Success Milestones

Month 6: leadership alignment visible; manager training launched; listening live; quick wins landed; baseline metrics set. Month 12: 50%+ managers trained; feedback loops closing; engagement trending up; transformation stories emerging; leading indicators improving. Month 18: 100% managers trained; +10 points engagement; turnover down; CSAT up; variance across teams narrowing. Month 24: processes embed love at work; lagging indicators markedly improved; cost of capital signals emerging; employer brand strengthened; measurable financial returns.

Governance and Accountability

Executive accountability: CEO champions; pay tied to people metrics; monthly reviews; quarterly all-hands; annual refresh. Manager accountability: effectiveness in reviews; promotions require people leadership; partial pay tied to team engagement; skip-level feedback; support then consequences. Board accountability: quarterly people metrics; human capital in risk; values-aligned succession; compensation considers people outcomes; culture expertise on the board.

Sustaining Momentum

Sustain by integrating people metrics into business rhythm, referencing values in decisions, keeping listening continuous, developing managers, and recognizing often. Evolve practices, increase measurement sophistication, and develop a leadership pipeline rooted in values alignment. Seek external recognition to amplify employer brand and attract aligned talent.



Love as Competitive Advantage

The Strategic Reality

In an economy where 90% of value derives from intangible assets, the quality of human relationships directly determines enterprise value. Companies that operationalize love at work—understanding, care, challenge, values alignment, and customization—create measurable competitive advantages that compound. This isn't sentiment. It's strategy.

The Implementation Opportunity

The research case is clear while implementation remains rare. First movers who act with discipline will outperform. Academic foundations, practitioner playbooks, measurement tools, and investable vehicles now exist; what's needed is courage and persistence.

The Leadership Challenge

Leaders must unlearn industrial assumptions, listen systematically, act in alignment with values even at cost, persist for 18–24 months, measure both leading and lagging indicators, scale internal best practices, and model self-love. As Bookbinder advises: lead with empathy and treat people with respect, courtesy, dignity, and trust.

The Economic Imperative

The business case: intangibles dominate; employee satisfaction predicts returns; engagement drives profitability and productivity; caring lowers cost of capital; HCF proves investability; and sustained care yields competitive advantage. Companies that master love at work build stronger balance sheets, brands, and long-term performance.

The Human Imperative

Work shapes identity, purpose, community, and contribution. Love at work allows people to feel valued, supported, challenged, and connected. As Desiderio suggests, imagine a world where most people say, "Thank goodness it's Monday." That future is built one caring practice at a time.

The Call to Action

Leaders: assess, design, commit, invest in managers, listen with action, measure, persist, and celebrate learning. Individuals: model values, practice radical candor, support colleagues, speak up on violations, and choose aligned organizations. Researchers: expand evidence and accessibility. Investors: incorporate human capital metrics, support HCF-like vehicles, engage on people practices, and vote for culture accountability.

The Future Is Being Built Now

The rise of roles like Chief Heart Officer signals a fundamental shift. Some organizations are already compounding advantage; others will follow or be disrupted. The only question is courage. Begin with Jamison's three questions: How are you doing? What are you working on? How can I support you? The intangible economy demands it; your people deserve it; your shareholders benefit from it.



References and Resources

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Organizations and Resources

Irrational Capital — Human Capital Factor (HCF) methodology; research on people practices and firm performance; Website: irrationalcapital.com.

Ocean Tomo — Intangible asset market value studies; Website: oceantomo.com.

Gallup — Global engagement research and tracking; Website: gallup.com/workplace.

SHRM — Employee turnover cost studies; Website: shrm.org.

PeopleResults — Dr. Fiona Jamison; Employee listening and analytics; Website: peoplereults.com.

Bravo For You — Patricia Bravo; Empathy strategy; Website: bravoforyou.com.

Proximal Development — Dr. Katie Desiderio; Leadership development; Website: proximaldevelopment.com.

Haefele Flanagan — Dave Bookbinder; Behind the Numbers podcast; Website: haefele.com.

VaynerMedia — Claude Silver, Chief Heart Officer; Website: vaynermedia.com.

Podcast and Media

How the Deal Was Done: Love at Work Podcast — Hosted by Laura Kellers Queen, EdD. Year-long exploration of love at work with featured guests including Dr. Katie Desiderio, Dr. Fiona Jamison, Patricia Bravo, Anthony Onesto, Dave Bookbinder, and others. A 29Bison production.

Recommended Reading for Implementation

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Laura Kellers Queen, EdD, is the founder and CEO of 29Bison and author of *People Economics: Defining and Measuring the True Value of Human Capital*, a work that reframes people as a measurable, strategic asset rather than a cost. She helps investors and leadership teams in the middle market see and quantify the people side of deals so they can make better investment decisions and build more valuable, resilient companies. Drawing on more than 25 years in human capital leadership and M&A advisory, she designs structured human capital due diligence, integration, and value-creation approaches that connect financial performance, workforce experience, and long-term impact.

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Special thanks

...to **Caroline Trudeau**, co-host of the 2025 special series, *How the Deal Was Done: A Year of Love at Work*.

Find us

Podcast: “*How the Deal Was Done*” - Available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and 29Bison.com

Social: #LoveAtWork #PeopleEconomics #29Bison
#HowtheDealWasDone

About 29Bison

29Bison, a certified B Corp, harmonizes human and financial capital for the middle market. We guide investors and portfolio companies through due diligence, value optimization, and pre- and post-transaction services—ensuring that every investment honors people, fulfills purpose, and creates lasting prosperity.

With a balance of data-driven inquiry and a strengths-based, people-centered approach, we help unlock human potential as appreciating capital. Our work creates enduring value by aligning people, culture, and capital with clarity, integrity, and vision.

The fine print

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