



3855 Norwood Court  
Boulder, Colorado 80304  
303.413.0400 **Phone**  
720.641.7565 **Cell**  
303.413.0500 **Fax**  
[www.miick.com](http://www.miick.com)

# The Leader's Cookbook

By Rudy M. Miick, FCSI

## Improving Human Integration

I enjoy sharing proven tools for leaders who want to ramp up top and bottom line performance quickly. At Miick & Associates, this means challenging the status quo and shifting your thinking process to embrace change. Most of our clients already have vision and goals in place and generally effective operating and hiring systems. Many are profitable. But, few have truly reached their potential of achieving exponential performance.

Our experience is that most leaders don't spend enough time integrating their *human systems*. For example, we spend plenty of time obsessing over the integration of our equipment or computers, but not the consistency in the way we talk, act and follow-up with each other as humans. The result is *dis-integration*, or lost opportunity. That's too bad because for maximum performance all employees must share the vision, and "BE" the business in everything they do. So, for optimum performance, try adopting our five-step plan for improving human integration:

### 1. Integrate new ideas and thinking

One of my favorites in the archives of lost opportunity is the following: A new hire joins the team. The new hire willingly offers a new idea, and is told one of the following statements post-haste: "That's not the way we do it here", or "We've tried that before and it didn't work", or even worse, "Oh, we don't talk about that here". Not long, within a few weeks at most, the ideas from this new staff member simply stop being shared. That's dis-integration. Our advice: encourage new ideas and thinking. Reward your employees for stepping out taking risk.

### 2. Integrate an atmosphere of open communication

You want effective communication. You profess to have an open door policy, but the staff doesn't perceive the "door" as really open. Sound familiar? We have worked with many leaders who profess the desire for honest feedback, but then roil when the feedback is presented. They wonder why they don't have new solutions, new products, better service or that the same fires need to be put out time and time again. This is dis-integration, and it has a heavy cost. We'd be able to quantify it if it were the computer system. So, imagine what the impact to performance would be if everyone was in the same zone all the time, sharing ideas, hearing each other, in hard conversations as well as the easy ones. Integration has far more impact than dis-integration.



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### 3. Integrate health and physiology

We ask our clients to integrate diet habits as a tool for effective leadership. Simply, a healthy body is going to support healthier decision-making and better performance for the organization.

Time and again, simple focus on healthier eating has an immediate impact on clearer decision-making. Measurable shifts in work performance can be readily observed. I have a CFO client that simply shifted from six sodas a day to one, and eventually, water only. According to those that report to him and those above him, his work production and connection to the business have improved by multiples in a matter of weeks. He feels stronger, happier and more rested at the end of a day than he ever did before. He's more productive. His work is in the zone, and he is more *integrated* to the business.

### 4. Integrate “purposeful work”

Remember the old parable about the bricklayer who thought that by carrying bricks up a hill he was an active part of building a cathedral? Meanwhile another brick carrier simply carried bricks, moaning all the way, because carrying bricks was how he got paid, and carrying bricks was what he was told to do. One moans, groans, and complains. The other is more productive, happier, and is able to inspire better performance from all. The *integration of a deep purpose* into work is almost magic in its impact on performance. Imagine if your employee training included the vision of building a cathedral rather than simply, “here’s how to sell this product”. Imagine how sales training would shift. Imagine if Sally was hired knowing that her job was the deeper purpose, and that the way to that outcome was through “sales”. Imagine how sales would increase!

### 5. Integrate reflection time

When was the last time you put your feet up on your desk, or went for a walk as part of your workday and just thought about “stuff?” Rarely, right? Most of us are just too busy, most likely reacting and becoming dis-integrated.

“Slow down to speed up” is a cliché worth noting. Those who are *integrated* may call this reflection time simply quiet time, some may call it visualization, prayer, meditation, guidance or pre-production. What worked well for you today? What could go better and how? I invite you to take 10 minutes to ponder and to open your mind...on a daily basis.

### Summary

So many times in public and privately held companies, we get stuck in a place of dis-integrating our mind, body and soul from one another in the name of work to achieve high performance. You work tirelessly to effectively integrate your systems and tools. I invite you to do the same with your people and improve your human integration!