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Return on Values:
Company Culture & Its Impact on Profit are
Focus of New Research Partnership between Benedictine's
Center for Values-Driven Leadership & the Small Giants Community

Chicago, Illinois ~ Benedictine University's Center for Values-Driven Leadership (CVDL, www.cvdl.org) announced a new research initiative today, Return on Values (ROV). The ROV initiative will explore the relationship between corporate culture and business success factors in small to mid-size companies. The CVDL is joined in this initiative by the Small Giants Community (SGC, www.smallgiants.org), a global group of company leaders who define success by not only their bottom line, but by their contributions to their community, dedication to great customer service and the creation and preservation of workplace cultures of excellence.

"We want to show that for small and medium sized businesses, engagement with multiple stakeholders is not just the right thing to do, but it is good for business," says Paul Spiegelman, founder of the SGC and CEO of his own corporation, The Beryl Companies (www.berylhealth.com). "We want to connect the academic world and the practitioner world around these concepts."

ROV, which will officially launch on August 1, 2012, is a three year undertaking that will explore qualitative and quantitative measures of the relationship between cultural factors and business success. The SGC and CVDL announced this initiative today, at the Small Giants annual international summit in San Francisco.

Note: Photos and video of the announcement are available upon request.

"A growing body of literature indicates there is a clear business case for doing business the right way – with concern for your employees, community, and customers. But we don't yet have a clear understanding of how these factors directly impact traditional measures of business success, like revenue and profit," says Dr. Jim Ludema, Ph.D., director of the CVDL and principal investigator for the research initiative. "And yet we know many businesses that are shining stars in this area, leading the way in their industries while being responsible and caring to their stakeholders. The Return on Values study will explore the business case of their success."

Just as importantly, the study will result in resources that business leaders can employ to replicate similar success. "We expect to uncover not only empirical data, but great case studies that can be used to teach others about how to run values-based businesses, and become the framework for curriculum development for future business leaders," says Spiegelman.

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SGC and CVDL first connected through Chicagoland business owner Tom Walter. Walter is a member of the SGC and has frequent interaction with graduates of Benedictine's College of Business. "This collaboration combines two organizations that understand the importance of values in the workplace – one academic based and one a community of businesses," says Walter. Businesses like Walter's award winning Tasty Catering (www.tastycatering.com) will be studied as part of the initiative.

The CVDL will partner with other research institutions to complete the work, which will then be published in both academic and practitioner markets. Other initiatives of the CVDL include its doctoral program in values-driven leadership (www.cvdl.org/doctorate), and the Champion of Responsible Business video series (www.youtube.com/BenedictineCVDL).

"The Center for Values Driven Leadership has an outstanding reputation for teaching business leaders how to run their businesses based on a foundation of core values," says Spiegelman. "This aligns perfectly with our business philosophies. We know that CVDL has the resources and people to manage this project to achieve groundbreaking results."

"We're delighted to be working with the Small Giants Community," says Ludema. "We are likeminded organizations with different skillsets and resources; together we can make a valuable contribution to the body of academic knowledge that will have an immediate and lasting impact for engaged practitioners. It's a win-win."

For more information on this initiative, please contact Amber Johnson, CVDL corporate relations advisor and the research initiative's communications manager, at 312.316.0680 or amberjohnson@ben.edu.

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About the Small Giants Community

Founded in 2009, the SGC is made up of small business leaders all over the world who define success by more than just their financial bottom lines, but also by their contributions to their communities, a dedication to great customer service and the creation and preservation of workplaces cultures of excellence. The community takes its name from Bo Burlingham's 2006 book *Small Giants: Companies That Choose to be Great Instead of Big*, (Paragon). Burlingham, an *Inc.* magazine editor-at-large, observed a set of six common characteristics in the successful companies he examined. The SGC serves to make these characteristics more common in small businesses.

About the Center for Values-Driven Leadership

The Center for Values-Driven Leadership offers research, education, and outreach opportunities to help business leaders forge new paths to profitability. It is a gathering place where top executives, entrepreneurs, and thought leaders come together to innovate at the forefront of values-driven business practice. More information about the Center can be found at www.cvdl.org or by calling (630) 829-6225.

About Benedictine University

Benedictine University is an independent Roman Catholic institution located in Lisle, Illinois just 25 miles west of Chicago. Founded in 1887, Benedictine provides 56 undergraduate majors, 16 graduate and four doctoral programs. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* recently ranked Benedictine University as the seventh fastest-growing campus among private nonprofit master's universities, and *Forbes* magazine named Benedictine among the top 20 percent of America's colleges for 2011. Benedictine University's Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) program is listed by *Crain's Chicago Business* as the fourth largest in the Chicago area in 2011.