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The 3 Values of Great Leaders

Are You a V.I.P. Leader?

By John Waid

Leadership is an overused word. There are a lot of managers in companies, but very few leaders. Even the ones that call themselves leaders possess attributes that leave much to be desired. Great leaders have a few qualities that make them special and make the companies they lead extraordinary for people and profits.

So what is the definition of leadership? Great leaders are not the people that you're forced to follow; they are the ones that you want to follow. Great leaders are humble, care more about others than themselves and know that it's not about the leader, it's about the followers. Most of the best leaders have a dream and turn that dream into reality with others.

So what's in the DNA of great leaders and what values do they stand for? What makes them V.I.P.'s?

VALUES

Value Lies in The *Values*.

The great leaders know that they are responsible for establishing the culture of the company. As a matter of fact, the great leaders know that culture is their number one responsibility and work on it daily.

Let's say that you take over a company that has been in business for 100 years, is currently about to go bankrupt, and has almost 100,000 people? What do you do first?

Most people would analyze the strategy and probably change it. What happens if the 100,000 people do not believe in the new strategy? Will you be successful?

Others would change the strategy and when that didn't work, they would focus on restructuring. Maybe a Chapter 11 will be their saving grace. But if that doesn't work? Then, of course it was not the leader's fault; it was because the people did not execute the strategy and then did not work well in the new structure.

The best leaders would analyze what the company was doing well when it was successful and see how they could replicate it. Most companies had a founder and beliefs that people followed that made the company successful. The best leaders work on the values and behaviors of the people and make sure

they worked on the culture first. Because without the people knowing and living the values that you stand for you may be doomed on getting people to follow you.

So the best leaders work on culture first and have unique values that they all know and they train on; and it is at the core of how they hire, fire, and promote.

So what are some things you can do today that would make you a better leader?

- a. Select or pare down your values to one to three values (no more than that) that are unique to what makes you successful.
- b. Define how these values should be lived down to details like “Our people smile with teeth.”
- c. Hire, fire and promote for these behaviors and make sure to hire people who already believe in them as they are more likely to do what you are going to ask them to do anyway. Emphasize and train the specific behaviors in detail. Success or failure in companies is all about people and how they behave.

Leaders should work on Why—Culture First through values and daily behaviors, How—Structure second through coaches and paying attention to how to serve the customers, and What—Strategy third through managers. Identify your sustainable competitive advantages and when they will be executed to produce results and profits. The best leaders are also master communicators.

INSPIRATION

Inspire on Purpose.

Great leaders make sure that everyone knows, is inspired by, and lives the purpose of why they are there. Many of the great leaders talk about the purpose of the company often and make sure that everyone cares about why they are there in the first place.

People in companies don't get frustrated necessarily by what they do, they get burned-out because they don't know why they do it or don't like who they are doing it for. Purpose-driven companies continually outperform companies that lack purpose.

Do you have a purpose, other than making money for why your company exists? Define this transcendent or noble purpose by:

- a. Talk about why you are in business. What is the ultimate outcome if you do great work? Who will it benefit?
- b. Decide what your purpose will be – some made up examples are “We Believe in Better Living”, “We Help People Be Better”, “We Inspire, Inspiration”
- c. Communicate a inspire people to live the purpose daily.

Leaders can inspire on purpose if they have a purpose. Make sure that you develop a purpose that others are willing to follow voluntarily.

PEOPLE

Be in the *People* Business.

The best leaders realize that if you do not put people before profits you will make fewer profits. The leaders that connect with the frontline and have the support of the people that make the money are the ones that people are willing to follow voluntarily.

There are leaders that care about the money, others about the customers, and still others that care about people (starting with the employees). The best leaders care deeply about their employees and put them first, knowing that if the employees live the purpose and values (culture) then they will be great to customers and produce more profits.

The best leaders are loved by their people, not feared. They care about each one of them even more than they care about themselves. They know that they are the examples for how they want others to behave. The best ones eat in the employee cafeteria, spend time with the front line, and value them. These leaders are especially adept at communicating with actions before words.

Some ways to focus on people first are:

- a. No matter what industry you are in, you should become an expert in people; because if you think about it, you are in the people business. First, you need to understand your people and need to serve them so they can serve the customer. Most companies are strong in technical skills and weak in people skills.
- b. Train on people skills and benchmark internally and externally against the best in the business.
- c. Make your headquarters “the people headquarters” and make sure you focus on hiring for purpose and values. Make sure your leaders are humble and believe they are and know how to be in the people business.

Want to be the best leader? Become a V.I.P. leader who focuses on Values, Inspiration, and Purpose and you too will be a V.I.P for your employees, customers and the bottom line.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

John Waid is the founder of C-3 Corporate Culture Consulting, a keynote speaker and author of the forthcoming book, *Inspiring Isabella – A Little Story for Leaders About Culture-Driven Leaders*. With a specialty and passion for corporate culture, sales and global business, John believes culture is the engine that drives companies to better results, higher morale, and increased profitability. An active speaker, trainer and subject matter expert, John Waid holds an enduring belief that corporate culture is the key to success for companies. For more information on John Waid, please visit: www.CorporateCultureConsulting.com