

FOCUS OF A LEADER

LEADER-OF-LEADER CORE VALUES

Because leaders and individual team members play entirely different roles on the team, it also takes a different set of values to lead a group of other leaders or managers in the company than to lead a group of individual contributors. As we have grown, this has become more apparent as we have witnessed team members highly successful in leading other leaders while others struggle profoundly and end up removed from that leadership category.

The following list of core values is also not designed to be inclusive, but it does clearly state common values that successful leaders-of-leaders possess in our organization. Together with the front-line leader values, these help us best serve both the organization and those in our care.

Leader-of-Leaders Core Values

All front-line leader core values plus:

Demonstrated Before Taking Role:

- Challenger/Disruptor
- Passion for the Business
- Entrepreneur
- Strategic Vision
- Curious Learner
- Grit
- Socially Aware
- Clear Communicator
- Value-Oriented

Developed Within 1st Year in Role:

- Positive Energy
- Leading with Influence

Demonstrated Commitments Before Taking Role

For someone to be considered for a position where they will be leading people who are leading teams, they must have already demonstrated all of the values for front-line leaders as well as the additional values below.

Challenger/Disruptor: While others wait for something to happen, leaders make something happen. They are change agents who challenge the status quo. They initiate. Leaders must be willing to swim upstream and refuse to mindlessly assimilate with the majority or be held captive to how most people think about something. They question the established process in pursuit of the best solution. They're even willing to challenge those whose approval they desire most. They recognize good is the enemy of great, and they're willing to break something to make it better. Around here, we love precocious people - those people who ask questions a little above their pay grade. Yes, they can be harder to manage, but they are the ones who will challenge what needs to be done so we can get to where we need to be. Without adequate humility and a willingness to be under authority, this is simply a rebel.

Passion for the Business: It's not enough to be inspired by our purpose or have a passion for people. Leaders must be passionate about what they're doing, deeply engaged, and believe in it to their toes. These people don't have to be constantly reminded of things because they often care about them as much as you do. They carry the torch, working hard to ensure that it's not forgotten and that it continues to grow stronger.

Entrepreneurial: These leaders have the acumen and independence necessary to own or operate a small business successfully. That doesn't mean they know everything they'd need to know about

finance, marketing, risk management, or strategic planning, but they are the type of person that would figure those things out along the way and not let them stand in the way of their business being successful. While this is related to a few of the other values, it speaks to the level of independence, acumen, risk-taking, and ability to learn on the fly and adapt that we need in leaders of leaders.

Strategic Vision: People with vision see what we should do, not just what we are doing. Leaders must think a few steps ahead and envision a future they will lead and inspire others toward. They need to have the capacity to see things before others do, including greatness in their people. They also must recognize when the current process or plan is broken and change their course of action. We aren't looking for people who are good at following a set of written rules or guidelines. Instead, leaders must be good at navigating issues and areas where there are no written rules. Leaders must also be able to level shift - know when to focus on details, focus on the big picture, and relate the two. They must be able to recognize the moments when their team gets off-track in a discussion, and they need to say, "Hang on guys, remember what we're trying to do here," and remind them of the vision.

Curious Learner: Curious learners have an insatiable hunger to learn and grow. They don't wait on others to challenge or feed them; they feed themselves. They are seekers, and naturally, become a student of our business. They're self-starters that take personal responsibility for their own growth and moving things forward. These people often lead with inquiry and have an in-the-bones desire to understand things. Curious people listen to learn and not just forward their own agenda. During a discussion, they aren't thinking of what they'll say next while another person is talking but are open and willing to take on a new perspective.

Grit: Leaders with grit display resolve and persistence despite adversity. If they're pioneering a new effort, they aren't hung up by challenges but have the determination to adapt and overcome. They have a resoluteness of will, a combination of passion and perseverance, and once they fully commit to something, setbacks will not dissuade them. Jesus was the ultimate example of this balance of both humility and uncompromising resolve. In Luke 9, we read of Jesus performing miracles and proclaiming the Kingdom of God as He did throughout His ministry, but there is a distinct shift in verse 51: "As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem." Jesus knew what His mission was, and nothing would keep Him from accomplishing it. There are countless stories of others like Abraham, Moses, David, and Paul demonstrating unwavering faith and conviction despite opposing circumstances. Is it any coincidence that the key leaders God hand-selected shared this unique "resoluteness of will"?

Socially Aware: This is the ability to accurately pick up on emotions in other people and understand what is really going on with them. This often means perceiving what other people think and feel, even if you do not feel the same way. For example, it's the ability to sense the tension in a room between other people or possibly towards you. But this can't only be done in moments when you are a passive observer. To be socially aware, you have to spot and understand people's emotions while you're right there in the middle of a situation - a contributing yet astutely aware member of the interaction.

Clear Communicator: This is the ability to clearly communicate concepts and the heart behind decisions in a way that connects with people. This doesn't necessarily mean they are an eloquent public speaker, but they must communicate effectively in a small group. They teach and bring others along in their understanding.

They can articulate their ideas or perspective in a way others can understand and weigh in on. They create clarity and security in situations where people are confused or afraid.

Value-Oriented: Being value-oriented is more than an operating principle; senior leaders must be value-oriented to their core. Value means that you get more than you paid. We want to provide customers with value and be value-oriented in every other aspect of our business. If the leader-of-leaders doesn't believe in value to their core, we will cease to be who we are. They never say, "I don't care what it costs," but it also doesn't mean we always pick the cheapest option. Sometimes we decide to go with a premium product, but we take a value-oriented approach, evaluating the total cost of ownership and deciding if it's worth it. These people hunt for ways to find and add value, asking questions like, "Can we get 80% of the benefit for significantly less cost?"

Developed Over 1st Year in Role

Inspiring Style/Positive Energy: Senior leaders need to exude positive energy, which inspires others. Energy is contagious, positive and negative alike. They must learn to be expressive and share their thoughts and passion. Apathy isn't an option for a leader of leaders. This doesn't mean someone must become an "eternal optimist," but they can't be a pessimist or have a victim mentality. Inspiring leaders are charismatic and communicate to motivate others to join them and give their best. They're able to connect at a deep, emotional level with people. They are persuasive and able to cast a compelling vision.

Leading with Influence: When leading at a higher level, you must learn to influence without authority. You will be collaborating

more with peers, different teams, and external partners, so you need to influence people regardless of your title or direct authority over them. Leading at this higher level should also affect how you exercise your authority with your team. It should trend more toward being counsel and asking good questions to challenge their thinking, rather than giving tasks or specific directives. It's delegating authority and power for them to make decisions and then walking with them.