

Core Values... A Compass By Which You Lead

If you have been in business any amount of time, by now you have probably come across a sea of definitions for leadership, not to mention an ocean of books about this thing called leadership. But we all know leadership when we experience it. More importantly, we notice it when it's missing. In business, the purpose of leadership is to inspire others to follow your vision/direction/dream for your business. That means getting people to move together in one direction--the direction that is going to sail your business successfully. And to do that you need a compass.

Core values are the compass by which business leaders motivate their crew. Have you ever heard of the saying, If you don't stand for something, you're liable to fall for anything? People will not tolerate, much less respect, someone in a leadership position who will fall for anything. Leaders know their values and direction. More

importantly, they make a point to give their crew the chance to steer the business along the chartered course. In the best businesses, team members are motivated by the chance to be something greater than themselves. And the leader gives them that opportunity.

What are your core values? When you started your business, how did you want it to run? What did you want to motivate people? Don't worry about being "wrong" when you answer these questions. The important thing is to answer them. Perhaps, respect, open communication and on-time delivery of service are your core values. For another business it may be delivering your products at the lowest cost. The first step to commandeering your crew is identifying the values by which you and your team are expected to operate.

Remember that people want integrity in their leaders.

There's no faster way to create mutiny than to lose the trust of your followers. If you find yourself having difficulty abiding by the core values, how will you convince your team to do the same? The values people see in you are those you act on, not those you talk about. Your actions will always be consistent with your real values, whether or not you are aware of or admit those values. Your core values should be clearly stated in your business and strategic plan, important employee communications and in interviews and reviews. More importantly, they should be evident in your actions in everyday communication and interactions with clients, crew and business partners. If there seems to be a regular or frequent clash between the stated values and the behaviors of the people in your organization, it's time to assess the values, the leaders and the business priorities.

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It's important as the leader to know yourself well enough to know what your true values are. If you discover that you actually value timeliness over creativity, that's your prerogative. Just be sure to change your message to acknowledge it, or you change your actions so your team does not feel lied to and frustrated as a result. Frustration is no way to motivate your team to achieve your vision.

For more information about core values or for assistance implementing any of these ideas, please email us at consulting@eversrobinson.com or call us at 602.230.9480.

