

Values build culture

Lean seeks the perfect process through the elimination of waste. Success relies on respect for people ... but what does that actually mean? We speak often about creating a culture of an Adult to Adult relationship through-out our organization. In this case it actually means that our personal values are aligned with our organization's values. Often however, our values are not articulated so that they can be followed.

We recently attended the Ethical Leadership Summit at the Soderquist Center (www.soderquist.org) where Don Soderquist spent considerable time discussing the power of having articulated values present and visible within the organization. During Don's tenure with Wal-Mart the organization marched to the following values;

- A vision that was more than financial
- A culture based on our values
- A genuine dedication to our people
- A commitment to our customers
- A partnership with our suppliers
- A proactive approach to change
- A passion for excellence
- A continuing strategic focus
- A committed leadership
- Execution

We are aware of the current tag line being used by Wal-Mart "Spend Less ... Live Better", this is really an extension of Sam Walton's original vision to improve the standard of living for people that shopped at his stores. He viewed the purpose of the organization to be the purchasing agents for their customers. As they negotiated for better prices savings were equally shared with 30% benefiting Wal-Mart, 30% to the benefit of the supplier and 30% applied to roll-back prices.

Don mentioned that he personally felt that he needed to know the name of the janitor, since this person more than others was tagged to preserve the image of the values of the organization. He was also very proud to mention that 70% of current Wal-Mart managers started as hourly managers.

Other snippets of leadership secrets shared included the following;

- Leaders set the course ... people do the work
- Progression Planning versus Succession Planning
- If the organization is growing by 30% how is your personal growth growing?
- Dream Big
- Faith sometimes can be more important than data
- As a leader you are always on the clock
- Life is a mosaic not a puzzle

Create non-negotiable values for your organization based on ;

- Integrity
- Respect for individuals
- Communications

Because we are working to create authentic leaders not Karaoke Managers.

Where Lean Thoughts can become Reality

"Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow."

Ronald. E. Osborn

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A VISION ARTICULATED BY VALUES

Last week we were in Chicago and found the following in a menu ... we thought this was a great example of how values can be articulated and communicated ... enjoy.

Sometimes the best plans are not planned at all -- it's an idea that pops up during a casual conversation with guests like yourself. One change ignites another, momentum builds, and suddenly an evolution.

So begins Big Bowl's journey from a noodle and stir-fry joint to a restaurant committed to authenticity, quality and sustainable practices.

A conversation about direct trade coffee and the benefits to the farmers landed the product on our menu. Purchasing locally grown produce came next, another nod to sustainability and commitment to better ingredients.

Inspired, we began thinking of other meaningful ways to improve. Heirloom pork from small family-owned farms in the Midwest followed and then all-natural chicken and a higher quality, humanely raised, all-natural beef. We also began purchasing sustainable and responsibly-fished seafood.

We revamped the children's menu to feature more of the antibiotic-free, naturally raised meat, artisanal noodles and local produce. Then we went one step further by redesigning our four-page kid's menu to promote the environment in a fun and interactive way.

With our menu now defined by sustainability, we turned to other aspects of the restaurant. We switched to eco-friendly cleaning supplies and post-recycled paper products, saving more than 800 trees each year. The menu you are holding is printed by a local business and even the cocktail napkins are unbleached and printed with non-toxic ink.

To show our support to the community, we banned bottled water from the menu and installed a filtration system. If you drive a hybrid car, you can valet for free at Big Bowl. If you want to burn the good kind of energy and bike to Big Bowl, you'll find recently installed bike racks. From our website, you can map your route to us in Chicago via public transportation to cut your carbon footprint for the day.

But there's more. Big Bowl entered into a legally binding contract to reduce and offset its carbon output by 100 percent. Simply put, it means finding ways to pollute less and funding environmental initiatives such as wind and solar power, sustainable farming and reforestation.

We've already cut our carbon output by doing more business with local companies, replacing our kitchen lighting with energy saving bulbs and installing light sensors that flick the switch when no one's around.

What we're learning on this journey is that the road to sustainability is never-ending. We suspect that our holistic approach will continue to expand with ideas born from simple conversations with our guests. Thank you for your support!

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