Pulse

12 Purposeful Leadership Principles

Creating businesses that matter

Serve others

The founding purpose of a business can get lost over time or the needs of the world change but all businesses exist to serve. To remain competitive, they need to bring value to their employees, customers, suppliers, community and not just shareholders.

Building coalitions

Driving change starts with identifying the key people who are best placed to initiate and build momentum. Change happens naturally by connecting people to something they care about and feel they can contribute towards.

Authenticity

Being purposeful is about getting to the truth of what you and your organisation are good at and the material value you bring to the world. Authenticity gives life to the things that make you and your organisation perform.

Journey towards a unifying vision

To motivate your workforce, customers and investors, you need to give them a vision for what the business is capable of doing and becoming. Attention needs to be given to ensure everybody is involved at the start of the journey and clearer of their roles.

Openness

Purposeful leaders spend time listening and understanding. Start by being open to the idea that everything you thought you knew before a meeting or conversation might be wrong. Deep and meaningful insight comes from keeping an open mind and not being held back by fixed thinking.
In this way you also build more authentic relationships.

Work iteratively

Purposeful organisations require a sensitivity to the existing culture and ways of operating. Going with the grain of how an organisation thinks and operates is a far easier way to drive change. It is also mindful of people's willingness to change old and unhelpful behaviours.

Courage

Purposeful organisations require the courage to make difficult decisions and to challenge the status quo whereby you stand for something and not just do what others are doing.

It starts with the individual

To change or improve an organisation, you have to start with thinking about people as individuals and celebrating their differences. A purposeful organisation recognises the potential in everybody. A diversified workforce is better qualified to serve a more diversified world.

Ownership

A purposeful organisation requires employees to take ownership of their actions. Their 1,000s of actions (small and big) can help a business to be more competitive.

Humility

The willingness to share and be honest about the challenge of doing good and making money, both at an individual and organisational level builds deeper and more authentic relationships. You, your employees, customers and investors will be far more supportive, if the organisation is open about its struggles.

Small things make a difference

It is often the small, everyday actions rather than the big things that people notice. Culture is created through the unspoken messages people receive about what is valued. The way we respond to somebody in a lift or to an email, is critical to building trust. Small things can also lead to become big significant action.

Fun

When we are at our best, we feel light, playful and open to new thinking. When we have fun, we feel a sense of hope and a willingness to trust. Meaningful work needs to touch our deepest human need to have fun and be happy.

How can you be more purposeful?

If our 12 principles resonate with you — either because you are working with them, or maybe you recognise them as missing from your organisation — then get in touch:

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