

Member's Quarterly

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Feature

Ignore the Golden Rule

The Platinum Rule at work

Your mother probably taught you to follow the Golden Rule — “Do unto others as you would have done unto yourself”. A strong value but I respectfully have to choose an even higher road. I’ll call it the Platinum Rule: “Do unto others what they would want done unto themselves.” DiSC is the best resource in the world to help you do this.

How do you make the Platinum Rule part of the company culture? First, you need to ask some heartfelt questions. “What makes your organization so special?” “What is this organization all about?” “What makes you passionate about coming to work every morning?” Having asked these questions repeatedly throughout my career, the overwhelming response centers on “We’re like family” — and this comes from all over the globe.

So think of your own personal family now. I bet you cherish their feelings enough to make a point of understanding how to treat them (and heaven knows each one of them is different). With family, you naturally apply the Platinum Rule.

The same thing can happen in your organization when people make a point of nurturing a strong family value. You look after each other — I’ve seen it in great companies many times. But it isn’t a case of establishing the value and being “done.” It’s never over. A continuous quest to understand and teach the value is all part of the career journey.

As your organization continues to face the many obstacles of being in business, nurturing this family value becomes more challenging. The rewards can be phenomenal. Brian Parsley, in his book entitled “inspHIREd”, explains the difference between “Team” and “Family”. This is so important because so many companies talk about the importance of teamwork and all sorts of sports analogies emerge. Yet, teamwork alone is not the complete foundation for long-term success and happiness.

Team — A group organized to work together; a group on the same side, as in a game.

Just because you’re on the “same side” and “work together” doesn’t mean success is a given. It’s great when you’re winning, but under enough stress the team shows weakness. Stress can come from tough times when the market turns; from people working extremely hard during good times; from poor communication anytime. A team can even be hired or hand-picked to accomplish a specific goal (look at many sports examples), but that will always be short-term. Family, on the other hand, takes on a whole different meaning.

Family — Two or more people who share goals and values, have long-term commitments to one another, and usually reside in the same dwelling place.”

There is nothing more important than family. I’ll bet you would sacrifice any commitment you have today to any team you are on to be there for your family in a crisis or for a special occasion. I’ve observed this in the cultures of great companies. It’s like a second family. This suggests a culture that empowers people to set high standards of care — both for customers and co-workers.

You can enhance or strengthen what you already have by applying the Platinum Rule. This means open communication and trust, to truly understand what is important to each other. You can’t broad brush the whole “family” — it happens at a personal level. To do this, you need to first understand your own priorities and what makes you tick. Then understand what makes others tick at an individual and personal level. You will then be in a position to do the right thing and communicate with each person the way they need it.

So go ahead, ignore the Golden Rule and move up to Platinum. Your mother will understand.

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