

Our Credo/A Work in Progress

We are thoughtful in all we do.

We are excellent listeners—to each other and to all members of our extended family (vendors, customers, communities, etc).

We will make the four words “What do you think?” an automatic instinct in all of our internal and external dealings; moreover, “What do you think?” will precede the explication of our own view in 99 out of 100 instances.

We are dedicated to and measure our success to a significant degree by our unwavering commitment to the extreme personal growth of every one of our employees.

We will only be “delighted” with our managers if their employees are universally surprised by the level of their personal and professional growth.

We will be clear that we view leadership at every level as a sacred trust—and that leaders are indeed the servants of their employees just as the effective classroom teacher is servant to the lives and growth of her or his students.

We believe in the “inverted organization chart”—with the “leaders” at the “bottom” of a reverse pyramid.

We will construct leaders’ incentive schemes so that measureable progress in human development is weighed as highly as marketplace success.

We will be a leader in research and development in every aspect of our business—and we will work primarily with vendors who are also fanatical about research and development; and work to attract a set of core customers willing to play at the edge of things and become our co-developers.

We will aim to make our customer engagements adventures beyond the comfort zone, or adventures in growth to use a less intimidating phrase—we will aim to add value in novel ways that surprise and stretch our customers and ourselves.

We will use the three words “Try it! Now!” almost as often as “What do you think?”

We revere the experimental method, and believe success is mostly correlated with the number of things one tries.

We wholeheartedly acknowledge the value of analysis, but in the end swear by “Actions speak louder than words.”

We “encourage” failures; that is we acknowledge that a near-religious devotion to “Try it! Now!” necessarily invites the failures that are part and parcel of trying new things.

We will, in fact, look askance at those whose records include few or no failures—such a spotless record suggests an unwillingness to brave the unknown.

We will, to summarize the last few items, all view ourselves as explorers-adventurers, proceeding toward individual and collective growth by actively engaging at the edge of things; we unstintingly believe that our customers will reap enormous value from our commitment to our constant, restless exploration.

We will encourage and insist upon constant and vociferous disagreement, but be absolutely intolerant of disagreement in the form of personal attacks.

We will cut “overhead” to zero—every “department” shall aim to be best-in-class in its arena, and hence a full-scale participant in our concerted effort to add value in all we do.

We will exude integrity, individually and collectively.

We will exemplify the word transparency in all of our internal and external dealings—and bend over backwards to give new meaning and breadth to the term “information sharing.”

We will individually and collectively accept blame for our mistakes, or even our rather minor contribution to others’ mistakes—and apologize accordingly and with dispatch.

We will bring to bear overwhelming and instant and collective force to redress any customer problem, real or imagined.

We will under no circumstance badmouth a competitor.

We will aim to turn every customer contact into a memorable experience, remembering that all of life is indeed a stage.

We honor the word “design” in all we do, in every nook and every cranny of our organization; every system, every web page, every customer invoice, every employee restroom is part of our purposefully designed “signature,” and stand out and exude exceptionalism in one way or another.

We understand that difficult decisions must be made, but we will bend over backwards to implement such decisions with kindness and grace—the dignity of the individual will always be foremost in our mind.

We will not intrude into our employees’ lives, but we are committed to aggressively helping employees achieve a healthy lifestyle.

We will master the art of appreciation and be profuse in our use of the words “thank you” to honor assistance of even the most minor sort.

We will acknowledge through celebration even small successes—and always cast a wide net in our “thank yous” to include bit players, especially from other functions.

We aim for others to always be surprised by our “vibrancy” and “vitality”—we view enthusiasm as the key to success in anything, and take particular care in leader selection to ensure that every one of our leaders is a “remarkable” “carrier” of enthusiasm through thick and, especially, thin.

We will drop whatever we are doing and rush to the aid of those involved in tight-deadline activities—even if those involved caused some of their own problems.

We will be careful in our planning, but also understand that nothing ever unfolds as planned—hence we will be known for our ability to muster resources in an instant, without fuss and from everywhere, to deal with the unexpected; participating in these ad hoc response activities will not be seen as a distraction from our “real work,” but as a significant part of our “real work” and an opportunity to contribute to others and build our own skills in ways we might not have imagined.

We fully acknowledge that other units-departments-functions have other points of view than ours, but we will bend over backwards to develop social connections with those in other functions so that dealings over warring perspectives are dealings among friends.

We acknowledge that agreed upon deadlines are holy writ, and will attempt to balance requisite urgency and requisite realism in all of our commitments.

We will fight tooth and nail to minimize the complexity that “necessarily” comes with growth and the mere passage of time.

We will declare total war on our own systems to insure that they do not strangle us.

We gladly acknowledge that anyone in the organization has the duty as well as the right to challenge anyone else when he or she believes they have a valid and useful perspective to offer—this is particularly true regarding any issue that has to do with safety, quality, or meeting agreed upon deadlines; such challenges may be firm but not rude.

We will be civil in all our dealings with one another.

We will bend over backwards to bring truly (not superficially) diverse views of every stripe imaginable to bear on plans and decisions of all sorts.

We will pursue “diversity” in part so that the composition of our workforce and leadership from top to bottom is a “pretty good” reflection of the demographics of the markets we serve or aim to serve.

We will use new technology tools to extend the definition of “our family” to every corner of the globe—we will welcome ideas and participation in our affairs from anyone and everyone.

We will aim for gender balance in all we do and from tippy top to bottom—for reasons commercial more than reasons moral.

We will never, in any way, compromise on the quality of our products or services—regardless of difficulties in our marketplace and economy.

We wholeheartedly acknowledge that in the short term (as well, obviously, as the long term) we must be profitable and exhibit stellar financial performance that is consistent with the audacious efforts to serve our people and our clients as described above.

We aim to be seen by others as “conservative” in our financial practices.

We shall talk about EXCELLENCE constantly.

We shall unfailingly aim for EXCELLENCE in all we do.

We shall use EXCELLENCE as the principal benchmark in the assessment of ourselves and our work and our community.

We shall never forget that the bedrock of EXCELLENCE is the unwavering commitment to growth of 100% of our employees—and, in fact, all of those we come in contact with.