

Q. & A.

Q. What is the biggest challenge facing leaders today?



A. “I believe one of the biggest challenges leaders face today is the quick adaptation needed in regards to the needs of the world. The world is always evolving and changing, and in turn, so does business. Whether it is safety precautions, finding the best technological advances or changes in the way you communicate with your audience, being able to adapt and change is vital.”

— **Jackson Draeger**,
doctor of Chiropractic medicine and owner,
Midwest Pain Solutions,



A. “One of the biggest challenges facing leaders today is letting go of the narratives that define the workforce. Most people have a desire to be successful whether they are a Millennial, Gen X, Gen Z or Boomer, but each version will look different. Today’s leaders must embrace the differences, be flexible and adapt to change while staying true to their values.”

— **Marla Micoley**, vice president of Realtyhive and human resource director with The Cottages Senior Living and Memory Care



A. “When I talk to other business leaders, we all share the same challenge. We can’t find employees to fill the many open positions within our companies. I have talked to human-resource people from a variety of professional industries. They have career fairs, major recruiting campaigns and still can’t find quality people to fill the roles they need.”

— **Trevor Rezner**, president, Matthews Tire



A. “One of our biggest challenges is long term forecasting and planning. With customer trends swinging several times over the last few years and consistent supply-chain issues, we need to narrow our projections to shorter periods of time for accurate predictions. This means we need to lead our team to adapt quickly to change and embrace it.”

— **Grant Pauly**, founder and brewmaster,
3 Sheeps Brewing Co.



A. “The biggest challenge I face is messaging and communication. I came on board in January 2020, right at the dawn of the COVID-19 pandemic. The uncertainty reinforced the need to improve internal communication systems and further integrate one of our core values, ‘optimism,’ into our organization.”

— **Jeff Niesen**, president, Van Horn Automotive Group



A. “The greatest challenge is managing the changing dynamics of the workplace and the impact of lead times on global supply chains that affect normal business operations. This involves managing how the organization pivots its production and operations to be responsive to the expectations of both employees and customers.”

— **Brian Doudna**, executive director,
Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation

Beyond being worth it

It’s important to always strive for excellence

Think of a product you have purchased that is excellent. What made it excellent? I can think of many things I own that are excellent. My Jeep, my iPhone, the water heater I purchased a couple years ago, all excellent.

What makes them excellent? First and foremost, they are worth what I paid for them. Each of these products met my expectation for cost, timeline, quality and functionality. In addition to being worth it, there is an above and beyond aspect for each.

My Jeep makes me happy. With the top down, cruising a trail in mid-summer, the world drifts away as I enjoy my time, made possible by a product I purchased. My phone helps we work, stay in touch with family, and it keeps me entertained. The water heater is the most relatable product to my business, believe it or not.

It’s just a water heater... how can it be excellent? Again, first and foremost, it was worth it. This is how the replacement of my water heater went down:

Unexpectedly, my water heater died. This was discovered by attempting to use hot water and only having cold water.

- I called a plumbing company I have worked with many times and have always had a good experience.

- The owner told me he could get me a new water heater that day, and it would cost about \$1,300.

- He and his team arrived on time, installed the new water heater and provided an invoice for about \$1,300.

- I went to use hot water, and I had hot water.

- The end.

The five steps above, outline a process that demonstrates why the water heater was worth it. I was completely satisfied and happy to pay the \$1,300 invoice because it was worth it. We defined worth it (above) as meeting expectations for cost, timeline, quality and functionality.



**SCOTT
TORNIO**
GUEST
COLUMNIST

“
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”

The plumbing company owner told me that the water heater would cost about \$1,300 and it did. He provided a timeline and met that timeline. The water heater was installed to the highest industry standards, and I have had no issues within the couple years I’ve had it, showing great quality. Functionality? I have hot water.

What made it worth it? Meeting or exceeding all expectations for cost, timeline, quality and functionality. There is no question that the water heater was worth it.

What made it excellent? The above and beyond things. The service the owner and his team provided. They were polite and personable. They were empathetic. They put covers on their boots to be respectful to my home. They put plastic on the basement stairs so the old water heater wouldn’t drip potentially staining water on my carpet. They communicated throughout and also followed up after to confirm that the new water heater was working, and I was satisfied. They actually cared about

what they were doing, and they were genuinely interested in helping me with a problem.

What is excellent? More than worth it. Worth it, plus personal ownership of the work. Again, no question here. The owner and his team were truly excellent.

It’s not enough to just do the job. Always go above and beyond to ensure the job is done right and the customer is satisfied. Always. To ensure excellence, and to be worth it, I use a code for managing myself and my employees. C.O.D.E. is an acronym:

- **Communication:** Know your audience and speak to be understood. Listen to understand and retain knowledge. The goal of all communication, spoken or written, is to ensure a mutual understanding is gained.

- **Ownership:** Work as though you own the company. Own the task and all possible outcomes. Be proactive and always contribute your own ideas.

- **Direction:** Give and insist on being given proper direction. We need thinkers. Respectfully challenge direction given, but also respect decisions made and work toward our common goal.

- **Ethics:** Act in the company’s and the client’s best interests.

Ownership goes beyond the code. This truly speaks to caring about the work. Not the clock. Not the place we are working from. The work is what matters. Always do work that is beyond worth it. That’s excellence. All other aspects of the C.O.D.E will be met or exceeded, when you own the work.

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THE BUSINESS NEWS

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