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How the Principles of Servant Hearts Shape the Culture Within the Dimmitt Automotive Group

By Scott Larguier, Chief Executive Officer,
Dimmitt Automotive Group



Scott Larguier

Culture is defined as a set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices that characterizes an institution or organization.

Within the Dimmitt Automotive Group, a culture of serving others is what the organization was built upon in 1924 when the late Larry Dimmitt Sr. ventured into the automobile business. He opened one small dealership in Clearwater. Back then, he was known to travel to different areas of the county, which could be an all day trip, and offer both fresh fruit and vehicles for sale. His entrepreneurial quest was to establish and grow a reputable business that served the needs of the community, while building a foundation of trust, integrity and respect. Times were certainly simpler back then, but today, nearly 100 years and three generations later, with a network of Florida dealerships from Crystal River to Sarasota, the legacy of service and family values are still the solid foundation of the organization and the key to its prosperity.

In the book, *Servant Hearts: The Legacy of Dimmitt Automotive Group*, Richard Dimmitt Sr., Larry Dimmitt Sr.'s grandson, shares how the company's willingness to engage and serve associates, guests and the entire community is foundational to continued long term success. The principles in Dimmitt's book have been consistently demonstrated through each generation of leadership, and have helped shape and guide the culture of the organization.

The mission of a company or organization speaks to its purpose and the goals of its operations. In defining our mission, Dimmitt Automotive Group established the importance of having a servant's heart. By engaging and

involving passionate associates in the thought process, and then thoughtfully setting to sell and service automobiles, while also making a difference in people's lives. Continuing in the spirit of our founders, the current mission statement at the Dimmitt Automotive Group was affirmed: to improve the lives of our associates, guests, and the community through service, excellence, and innovation.

While it is certainly imperative to operate a profitable organization, a corporate culture focused solely on the bottom line may not always experience long term success, especially when outside factors impact the business climate. Dimmitt Automotive Group chooses to have a relationship-based company where people are treated like family with respect and dignity instead of a transaction-based business, where nameless faces purchase vehicles from the dealership.

While the mission statement explains why we are in business, our core values define what is needed to accomplish this mission. In his book, Dimmitt outlines three core values that bring the company's mission to life: character, commitment and cooperation. We believe an organization or individual of the highest character will possess qualities of honesty, courage and integrity. They will also willingly use their talents and abilities to strengthen and encourage each other, their guests and the community.

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SAVE THE DATE

TECO ENERGY CENTER
FOR LEADERSHIP
UPCOMING EVENTS



Modern Advances in Leadership Certificate Program

Jan. 22 – April 16

For more information, visit:

www.ut.edu/cfl/leadershipdevelopment/

Leadership Speaker Series Featuring Gene Lunger, Ashley Furniture

Feb. 4, 2019 | 4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

For more information, visit:

www.ut.edu/cfl/speakerseries

2019 Leadership Summit

Feb. 13, 2019 | 7:15 a.m.– 1 p.m.

For more information, visit:

www.ut.edu/cfl/leadershipsummit/

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How the Principles of Servant Hearts Shape the Culture Within the Dimmitt Automotive Group

Dimmitt Automotive Group also provides opportunities for both individual and corporate character growth. We believe in a culture of learning. Earlier this year, we invited distinguished faculty from the The University of Tampa's Sykes College of Business to meet with our leadership team and share their Leadership Development seminars for leaders and future leaders of the organization. The first seminar, *Getting to Know Yourself: The Key to Success*, offered tools to effectively cultivate and harness talents of the workforce. It also challenged us on how we as leaders might need to grow.

Community Value Days are another cornerstone of our culture. We provide all associates opportunities throughout the year to be paid while volunteering their time for those in our community who are most in need. Time and time again we hear stories from our team about how personally rewarding these Community Value Days are. This time allows us to connect in our community with care and compassion. It affords a moment where real life opportunities spawn gratitude and a renewed perspective.

Hand in hand with character, there is a strong commitment from every member of the Dimmitt organization to do whatever it takes to provide personalized, caring and compassionate service to the guests and the community. This means living the mission statement and core values every minute of every day, taking the initiative to support fellow associates and leaders, internalizing the spirit of the guest service standards, and most importantly, leaders doing whatever is necessary to sincerely serve the associates in the accomplishment of their work responsibilities.

Cooperation is the core value that makes it possible for the organization to come together, stay together, and work together. Like other businesses, we are only as strong

as our weakest link, so interdepartmental cooperation is highly emphasized. To foster cooperation among the sales staff, a customer relationship management (CRM) system was put in place so that returning guests will be assisted by the same sales associate who served them on a previous visit. This preserves the working relationship among sales associates and demonstrates consistency and cooperation to the guests. In another UT Leadership Development seminar, *Increasing Productivity by Leading Teams*, participants gained an understanding of the characteristics of a good team, stages of team formation, and how to build an effective team. Creating a team mentality and cooperation within the organization is important in developing associates who serve one another first and take personal responsibility when opportunities arise. These attitudes bring core values of character, commitment and cooperation to life.

In the competitive automotive industry, we hope that the Dimmitt Automotive Group stands out not only for its longevity and reputation of providing for the transportation needs of the community, but more importantly, how our associates make guests feel at every point of contact. We seek only teammates that have an internal passion to serve. We must all adhere to the highest standards and accept only a work environment that encourages responsibility and the initiative to care for each other and every guest that visits, so that everyone feels respect, trust, compassion and genuine concern for their needs.

Though life today is fast paced and much has changed since Larry Dimmitt Sr. set out on his mission so many years ago, the foundation he built his company upon remains the same. Trust, integrity, respect and approaching life with a servant's heart, never goes out of fashion.

TAMPA BAY LEADERSHIP REVIEW

A PUBLICATION OF THE TECO ENERGY CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP



**Wednesday
Feb. 13, 2019**

The University of Tampa
Vaughn Center
9th Floor, Crescent Club

General Admission: \$79
Table Sponsorship:
\$500 (table of 6)

QUESTIONS?

Please contact:
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THE UNIVERSITY
OF TAMPA
SYKES COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
TECO ENERGY CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP



2019 LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Jen Shirkani

Author of "*Choose Resilience*" and "*Ego vs EQ*"
Emotional Intelligence Speaker

LEADERSHIP PANEL:

Bob Rohrlack

President and CEO, Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce

Major General (Ret.) Edward F. Dorman III

United States Army, (Retired), Director, Logistics & Engineering, U.S. Central Command

Henry Gonzalez III

Tampa Bay Market President, Beach Community Bank

EVENT SCHEDULE

7:15 a.m..... Breakfast (included)
8 a.m..... Presentation by Jen Shirkani
9 a.m..... Leadership Panel Discussion
10:45 a.m..... Round Table Discussions
Noon..... Lunch (included)

This event is free to registered students and guests.

Limited seating. Reservation required.

RSVP: www.ut.edu/cfl/leadershipsummit/

Iconic Leadership Qualities of Winston Churchill

By F. Frank Ghannadian, Ph.D., Dean, Sykes College of Business



F. Frank Ghannadian, Ph.D.

One cannot watch any television documentary or read any book on World War II and not see or think of Churchill standing against the most wicked man of the 20th century, Adolf Hitler. There were other leaders who stood steady against the evils of World War II, like our own President, Franklin Roosevelt. However, Churchill leading a small island against the entire continent of Europe, makes him a commander worth studying by any leadership student.

The recent movie about Churchill: *The Final Hour* makes one think of the hard times a British premier would have to go through to survive a chaotic world that was created by World War II and Hitler. A story exists about Churchill, asking him when he knew that Britain would be victorious in the Second World War. Churchill said he was late for

a meeting after London had been bombed and his driver tried some shortcuts and went up a one way street to reach his destination quicker. The car was halfway through the one way road when a traffic policeman popped up in the middle of the road and stopped the car. The driver informed the policeman that the passenger was the prime minister and he was late to an important meeting. The policeman said, "Yes, I know the car, I know the prime minister and I also know my duty." The driver was forced by the traffic police to turn the car around and was given a traffic citation. The driver turned to apologize to Churchill for the detour and saw the prime minister in a cheerful mood.



Lighting up a cigar, Churchill said to the driver, "Britain will win this war." Some of these leadership traits can be summarized from two great books on Churchill. These classics are "Churchill" by Martin Gilbert and William Manchester's "The Last Lion." There were many traits that made Churchill an iconic leader but eight of them I highly value and list here:

Leadership Traits of Churchill:

1. Have Respect For Your Peers:

People working for Churchill knew he had been in the trenches with them and suffered hunger, thirst and agony. He embraced all that was around him, which made him an exceptional leader of the times. The value of a leader is sometimes measured in how one treats his colleagues and continues to support them after they have less to contribute. Genuine and continued faithfulness to one's associates is one of the strengths of a true leader.

2. Expect Criticism From Others:

Rarely can one lead or make decisions without being criticized by some. The higher up one is, the greater and more criticism one receives. How one handles these criticisms is what makes a great leader stand out from an ordinary one. Leaders can be criticized for all or many decisions that they make every day. Most that criticize do not have or are not privy to the level of information and reasons that cause a leader to make particular decisions. Churchill took a lot of criticism from politicians and people of all sectors. To Churchill, criticism was like a pain in the human body, although unpleasant, he said, "where would the body be without it." Churchill knew that criticism is automatically generated with any decision and used it to guide him as a confirmation of the right course. So Churchill would allow and listen to criticism to increase his conviction or steer him the right direction.

3. Be A Realistic Dreamer:

Leaders who seek to change their environments have to be able see beyond what is and to look at what can be. Leaders must be able to visualize the "Promised Land." Churchill initially dreamed and visualized an allied victory in World War II. Once the dream was visualized, strategies were identified. Then it became a reality. Churchill's vision was always total victory against Nazism and he never thought any different. His clever use of the "V" sign used for Victory rallied his countrymen which led to victory.

4. Have Courage to Act:

Courage is hard to define but can be easily observed. This essential skill that all leaders need and Churchill had is epitomized in his famous quote in his 1942 speech: "Never give in, never give in, never, never, never in nothing great or small . . . Courage is not a genetic trait but is one that one learns throughout one's life." Courage is a skill that Churchill learned from his boyhood at school when he was bullied by others. Much can be said here looking at Churchill's life but some easy examples were as follows. First as a soldier, and later as a politician, then as prime minister of the British Empire during the Second World War. His courage continued throughout his life, even in the 1950s, when he brokered improved relations between the Soviet Union and Great Britain.

5. Be an Agent for Change:

Churchill's reigning thought that was that to improve requires change, but to be perfect you have change often. By nature,

*"Never give in, never give in,
never, never, never in nothing
great or small . . . Courage is not
a genetic trait but is one that one
learns throughout one's life."*

Sir Winston Churchill, Former British Prime Minister

*Winston Churchill photo source: Library of Congress,
Reproduction number LC-USW33-019093-C*



most humans don't like change. Life is continuously changing. Learning how to anticipate change and how to use it to one's advantage creates great power for leaders in moving towards the future.

6. Give More to Others Than You Receive:

Leaders who give more of everything they have are better leaders. Churchill understood that each generation was responsible to give more than it had received and to invest in others. History has shown that great leaders can't succeed without having the mentality of giving. Small scale profiteering does not help leaders and success often happens when others carry the ball across the line over the long haul.

7. Communicate The Mission Often:

Churchill was not a great orator, and speeches sometimes embarrassed him, but his message always got across. He was at times emotional and could not hide it. He worked on this skill and his speeches influenced every corner of the allied forces.

Leaders cannot succeed when others who are following don't know the destination of the mission. Churchill made sure that all understood the final mission without compromising the secrecy of the strategies employed.

8. Appreciate and Enjoy life:

Many leaders sometimes lose sight of the whole picture. They are skillful and competent but have lost their ability to create and inspire others. Churchill loved poetry, history, and many aspects of life. He realized that life was a combination of both good and bad and refused to insulate himself from the latter. Churchill was able to connect with people of differing experiences and feel what they felt. This feeling of love and empathy for others is a powerful tool for any leader.

I am sure that the above few words do not do justice to the leadership genius of Winston Churchill but hope they give guidance to leaders at all levels and inspires them study Churchill more often.



Bella L. Galperin, Ph.D.

On Feb. 21, 2018, Ryan Holiday, best-selling author of *Ego is the Enemy* and *The Obstacle is the Way*, delivered a keynote address at UT's annual Leadership Summit. The theme of the TECO Energy Center for Leadership's Summit was "Conquering the Pinnacle of Leadership." Holiday was later joined by other panelists including: Gregory Celestan, CEO, Celestar Corporation; Judith A. Lisi, President/CEO, David A. Straz Jr. Center of Performing Arts; and Timothy J. Adams, Chairman of the Board, H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center.

Ego is the Enemy: Perspectives of Ryan Holiday

By Bella L. Galperin, Ph.D., Professor of Management and Senior Associate Director, TECO Energy Center for Leadership

Holiday discussed how ego can be detrimental to a leader. Successful leaders will keep their egos in check and turn trials into triumphs. Holiday's perspective is based on Stoicism, the Hellenistic philosophy founded in Athens by Zeno of Citium in the early 3rd Century BC. The philosophy proposes that virtue (e.g. wisdom) is happiness; and judgment is based on behavior rather than words. As individuals, we are unable to control external events but can govern ourselves and our responses.

According to Nassim Nicholas Taleb, the modern day philosopher and writer, a Stoic is someone who "transforms fear into prudence, pain into transformation, mistakes into initiation and desire into undertaking." Reflecting upon this definition, Holiday argues that some of the greatest leaders, such as George Washington, Adam

Smith, and John Stuart Mill, have been inspired by Stoicism.

In a nutshell, Holiday sums the practical philosophy as: "Take obstacles in your life and turn them into your advantage, control what you can and accept what you can't." As leaders, we have the choice to make good and bad choices.

Successful leaders will make the choice to control their egos. In history books, one is able to find countless examples of leaders who have fought their egos in order to put their goals above their desires for recognition. Well-known leaders, including George Marshall, Jackie Robinson, Katharine Graham, Bill Belichick and Eleanor Roosevelt, have reached the pinnacle of success because of their ability to conquer their own egos.



Ryan Holiday (right) alongside influential panelists (from left to right) Gregory Celestan, Timothy Adams and Judith Lisi at the 2018 Leadership Summit in February.

While many believe that the main challenge to success is managing external factors, Holiday argues that one's worst enemy is internal—our ego. Leaders' egos can impact our advancement in our careers—whether it is early on or at the peak. Early in our careers, our ego can prevent us from learning and developing our talent. Later on, our ego becomes linked to our faults and makes us more fragile as problems are amplified in our minds. Hence, bouncing back from a gaffe becomes more challenging. Our ego holds us back regardless of the stage in our life.

Given the digital world that we live in filled with selfies, reality television, and other forms of self-promotion, the battle against ego must be fought on many fronts, says Holiday. While some may argue that selfies are only a form of self-expression, others state that it's a destructive sign of growing narcissism in Western society.

A recent study suggests that Americans suffer from collective narcissism, a phenomenon in which individuals show excessively high regard for their own group. Just under 3,000 Americans across 50 states were surveyed and results show that many of them have an exaggerated and inaccurate view of the importance of their state's role in U.S. history. The researchers argue that this ethnocentric bias is due to ego protection, selective memory retrieval processes and poor statistical reasoning.

So how do we manage our toxic ego and narcissism? The answer is: awareness. While the first step appears to be straightforward, the next step is where the hard work begins. Holiday proposes 25

recognized exercises that have been used by leaders to remain humble. The top five exercises are listed below:

1. Adopt the beginner's mindset.

Epictetus the famous Stoic philosopher said, "It is impossible to learn that which one thinks one already knows." Our ego prevents us from learning. One way to embrace a beginner's mindset is to pick up a book on an unfamiliar subject. Perhaps it's time to stroll through Barnes & Noble and pick up a book on architecture or art? Remind yourself how much you don't know.

2. Focus on the effort, not the outcome.

Michelangelo once said "If people knew how hard I worked to gain my mastery, it wouldn't seem so wonderful." We need to emphasize the process rather than the outcome. When more focus is placed on effort and doing your very best, then the process itself becomes exciting and rewarding, regardless of the outcome. Doing your best is what counts the most important and extrinsic rewards are just an extra.

3. Choose purpose over passion.

"If passion drives you, let reason hold the reins," Benjamin Franklin noted. Given that our passions may change, it's recommended not to be only motivated by passion. When passion is shared with reason, people are more dedicated and have greater control over their direction.

4. Shun the comfort of talking and face the work.

Calvin Coolidge said "All growth depends upon activity. There is no development



Ryan Holiday, Author of "Perennial Seller," "Ego is the Enemy," "The Daily Stoic" and more

physically or intellectually without effort, and effort means work." While it's important to have a good idea, to bring a project to life begins with your ability to get started. In order to get a project off the ground, it's necessary to face the work and not be fearsome of the work ahead.

5. Kill your pride before you lose your head.

St. Vincent de Paul said "Humility is nothing but truth, and pride is nothing but lying." These words stress the danger of excess pride. Rather than rely on your past glories, the key is to think about the work that still needs to be done. Holiday emphasizes that "You must remember that humility is the antidote to pride."

As we reflect upon history, the great leaders have shown humility and have recognized the detriment of the ego. Holiday urges us to make the choice and become great leaders by leaving our ego at the door and working on turning trials into triumphs.

Sources: Holiday, R. (2018). Meditations on Strategy and Life. Retrieved from <https://ryanholiday.net/>
Putnam, A.L., Ross, M.Q., & Soter, L.K. Roediger, III, H.L. (2018). Collective Narcissism: Americans Exaggerate the Role of Their Home State in Appraising U.S. History. Psychological Science 2018 Jul 25:956797618778235. doi: 10.1177/0956797618778235. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29911934>

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