

What I Believe

I've had the good fortune to work for some incredible leaders and strong organizations in three different countries and in many different business units. This has enabled me to learn from the best and cultivate some beliefs/principles that I deeply believe in and try and adhere to everyday. They shape who I am.

1. Operate with a "what has to be true" mindset in everything we do. This means you never have to say no because you lay out clear options with pros/cons/financial implications. It forces the leaders to make tough, informed choices and minimizes time spent playing "where's Waldo!"
2. Play to win vs. playing not to lose – this means staying constantly on the offensive and never giving an inch to competition. It means innovating everything we do which makes it hard (if not impossible) for competition to keep up.
3. Hire for attitude and resiliency, train skills – Give me someone with a background where they overcame some seemingly insurmountable obstacle and has a great attitude, I'll show you someone who will figure out how to succeed. A skill can be trained if someone is willing to learn and wants to succeed – no one can train an attitude. Life is 10% what happens to you, 90% how you react to it.
4. Build a strong organization (right people in the right jobs, recruiting, focus on building capability) and the results will follow – Anyone can get results for a year or two, but sustainable results are only achieved when the organization is fundamentally strong and built for the future. That means getting the right people in the right jobs even if it means short-term upheaval. Leadership teams and functional leaders should minimally spend 40% of their time working on building a strong organization.
5. The best organizations debate vigorously, challenge each other but decide and commit as one - a fractured leadership team/organization will never succeed in the long term. Every effort must be made to remove those who are not committed to the direction and are a poison to the organization. This may be painful but it has to happen and is almost always in the best interests of all involved.
6. Integrity (doing the right thing even when no one is looking) is the greatest personal attribute a leader can possess – This means always taking the "hard right" versus "easy wrong" decisions. Ever worked for someone you didn't respect due to integrity issues (say one thing, do another; don't support you in front of management, take the easy wrong choice because it caused the least amount of waves, etc)? Our work is not a popularity contest and whether someone "likes" you or not is unimportant. However, without respect/trust, we will never succeed.
7. Keep perspective on what we do – What we do isn't a daily battle for life and death. It's business. We shouldn't become so self-important and self absorbed that we forget this. Perspective tells the organization that we are in touch with reality and that we don't over-react. This simply means that we are always passionate about winning and delivering our commitments, but we don't take ourselves too seriously.
8. Great organizations have work life balance because the opposite will not draw the best talent and be successful long term – "Happy at home, happy at work." People don't mind working hard – in fact like it. Balance doesn't mean getting off at 5pm everyday – it means allowing individuals to have meaningful personal lives that aren't dictated by what's happening at the office. As leaders, our role is to create and role model this. We must also be clear on expectations and help our organization to achieve the balance they need.
9. Organizations look to what you do, not what you say, as a true indication of who you really are- People see right through phony platitudes and insincere intentions. They look at what you do – especially at what you do when you think they don't see you.

10. A great strategy is meaningless without flawless execution – a lot of times as leaders we leave the executional details to those “closest to the business.” Leaders must never neglect details as this is where the battles are won and lost.
11. Organizations must have a culture where praise and constructive criticism flow unabated up and down the organization – I don’t care what culture or country you’re in, individuals (both coaches and direct reports) appreciate and respect honesty in terms of how they’re doing and what they need to work on as long as it’s fair and balanced. An annual performance assessment should be a formality and never a surprise. We must always be mindful of how we say things as it is often more impactful than what we say. I always try and remember when leaders whisper, organizations hear a shout.
12. Great leaders truly listen (not just hear) their organization – How many times have you been on the receiving end of a decision without any chance to input or give feedback? It’s one of the most demoralizing things as leaders that we do to the organization. Regardless of how “right” or “simple” the choice is, it’s always great to get input from the organization to make them feel ownership of the choices and confidence in the direction.
13. Every individual who works for P&G wants to succeed – Have you ever met someone at the company who said, “I don’t want to succeed at P&G?” Probably not because almost everyone wants to do their best. However, we sometimes let them fly on their own and contribute their failure to “not being a good fit.” Job 1 as leaders is to create a culture, with systems, and clear expectations (a picture of what success looks like) that give everyone in our organizations a chance to succeed.
14. The true test of a leader is how well an organization succeeds after they’re gone – this is the true mark of Level 5 leadership. This is the ultimate test of someone’s passion for the company/organization for which they work vs. their own individual fulfillment.