



Culture Mechanic

A Service of Values Coach Inc.

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MAKING CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS VISUAL

As a Culture Mechanic subscriber, you are authorized to share this report with anyone in your organization (or in your family).

12 Reasons that Culture Eats Strategy for Lunch

I recently posted a 77-slide PowerPoint presentation on 12 Reasons that Culture Eats Strategy for Lunch, including real world examples from a variety of different industries. You can download the presentation [at this link](#).

MAKING CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS VISUAL



Pictures really are worth thousands of words

It's not enough just to talk about cultural expectations – these values also need ubiquitous physical and visual reminders. Values Coach clients often use *The Self-Empowerment Pledge*, *The Pickle Pledge*, and the other tools and techniques we've developed to exemplify and encourage these values in the workplace. One organization that does a great job at this is Dartmouth-Hitchcock, where I had the privilege of speaking for a group of OR managers last year. Founded in 1893, Dartmouth is the fourth oldest medical school in the country. Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center is New Hampshire's only Level 1 trauma center and air ambulance service, and the state's only academic medical center with nearly 1,000 primary care doctors and specialists.

Dartmouth-Hitchcock has defined its core action values as: **stewardship, trust, integrity, respect, transparency, commitment, teamwork, and community.**

Not only has Dartmouth-Hitchcock defined their values, but they come alive and are present every wing and office of their facility. To more fully demonstrate this Culture of Caring, the hospital has produced a video series called “A Culture of Caring: Our Stories” to demonstrate what these words mean to the people of Dartmouth-Hitchcock. Dartmouth-Hitchcock has also generated a number of eye-catching banners to help remind employees and patients of their commitment. These banners showcase exemplary staff members living these values in the workplace. The medical centers core values are listed at the top of each banner – a visual reminder of what can be expected from employees and patients alike in terms of treatment and service. As I walked around the facility I was impressed with how ubiquitous the reminders were – we will be defined by a culture of caring.



LESSONS ON MAKING CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS VISUAL:

Make it personal. What better way to make these words come alive than to have your own people define them? That way, the positive trend-setters in your organization receive recognition for what they do. This Spark Plug at Sidney Regional Medical Center took the initiative to make her own pickle jar for the office. In doing so, she set an example for others and provided a useful strategy for combating toxic emotional negativity in the workplace.



The day I visited Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, CEO Jim Weinstein had tacked his laminated card of The Pickle Pledge on his office door – what sort of message do you think that sort of visible action has on people?

Post reminders. Not only are these posters show what the people of D-H stand for, but they also serve as powerful reminders to continue living these values and making these words come alive through patient and employee interaction. In the Values Coach Inc. office, we have taken *The Self-Empowerment Pledge* and made posters – one for every day of the week. We hang them in the office to remind ourselves to make and keep these promises, and to share them with anyone else who walks through our door!



Michelle Arduser with Pledge posters at Values Coach offices

One of the most visual – and most powerful – uses of *The Self-Empowerment Pledge* is when groups gather each day for a few minutes and make that day’s promise *as a group*. In effect, each individual is making a promise to him or herself – and to coworkers! – to be responsible, accountable, determined, and resilient, and to make a contribution, have a positive perspective, and let their faith and gratitude shine. When I watch these happenings (and they are indeed happenings) I am always impressed by the number of people who have actually memorized the promises. Watch the one-minute video at the link immediately below of a group of about 50 people at Tri Valley Health System in Cambridge, Nebraska making the Determination Promise together; if you look closely you will see that more than half of the people in the group are doing the promise *by heart*.

[Reading of the Determination Promise at Tri Valley Health System](#)

[Download my slide show on The Self-Empowerment Pledge here](#)

[Download mini-posters for each day’s promise here](#)

Get behind the movement. The words Dartmouth-Hitchcock has chosen are *everywhere* and apply to *every aspect* of the institution “from taking care of patients at the bedside, to maintaining our facilities; from serving healthy food options in the cafeterias, to greeting patients when they walk through our doors.”



This is a picture of the Certified Values Trainers at Sidney Regional Medical Center. These trainers receive rigorous instruction on the Values Coach strategies and approaches. After

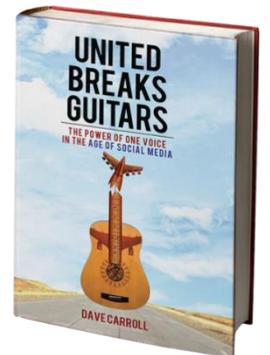
their training, they return to their hospitals and implement what they've learned. These individuals deserve a great deal of respect and praise as they are often the ones to initiate the movement.

Build Culture on Core Values. Without a solid foundation, there is little room to progress or succeed. That is why it is so important to first establish what your organization stands for and believes. Without common ground, it's virtually impossible to build a sustainable culture. At Harlan County Health System in Alma, Nebraska we had participants in our course on *The Twelve Core Action Values* draw a picture representing their vision of and commitment to values on the front of the t-shirt. One Spark Plug drew this picture in which *The Twelve Core Action Values* are depicted as the gateway to success.



BookSpark: Telling your story

In Dave Carroll's book, *United Breaks Guitars: the Power of One Voice in the Age of Social Media*, Carroll describes how he got to the heart of United Airlines by demonstrating his musical talents in a [YouTube video](#). The book chronicles the social-media whirlwind that resulted from the video and what lessons large corporations can learn from their customers. Here is an excerpt from that book:



“So why is so much time and energy being invested in showing product differentiation instead of sharing who the company is and their unique story? To me that defines an opportunity lost.”

-Dave Carroll, [United Breaks Guitars: the Power of one Voice in the Age of Social Media](#)