



A Successful CEO Shares His 6 Qualities of Great Leaders

By Susan Saldibar

We read a lot about leadership in senior living these days. We ask rhetorical questions such as “Where are all the great senior housing leaders?” Yet it’s hard to get our arms around what makes a leader great in the first place.

It helps to talk with someone who knows from experience. I spoke recently with Phil Fogg, Jr., President & CEO of Marquis Companies, a leading provider of senior housing and care communities. Phil has been really successful in attracting and building great leaders. And his impressively low attrition rate tells me he’s great at keeping them too.

“Great companies tend to be great across the board,” he tells me. “So, not only do they have great leadership; they also have lower attrition, better 5-star ratings, worker’s comp, and a stronger overall bottom line,” he adds. Makes a lot of sense. But what goes into making great leaders and how are they impacting their communities? Here are six things that make someone a great leader:

1. **Great leaders come out of great cultures.** There’s no getting around that fact. You need to build a culture that is authentically positive and embraced by everyone, top down, or it won’t work, Phil explains. Positive environments nurture great leaders. And they hang on to them.
2. **Great leaders make great choices.** This is key, according to Phil. “It’s the accumulation of our choices we make every day that define our culture,” he says. And, it’s understanding what your choices are, big and small. “Stopping to pick up a piece of

trash is a choice. Not stopping is also a choice,” Phil explains. “That may seem like a little thing, but it’s part of how you create a positive culture. Do you, as a leader, do it or not?” Of course, great leaders not only will pick up the trash, but they’ll stop to help a resident in need. And they encourage others to do the same. Not by words on paper, but by their actions.

3. **Great leaders always want to be better.** “They are always searching for ways to improve themselves and their community environment,” says Phil.
4. **Great leaders keep the meaning and purpose in their profession.** That means they are focused on more than just compliance, Phil says. They are tuned in to the atmosphere and to the wellbeing of, not only residents, but their families, the staff and just about everyone who walks through their doors.
5. **Great leaders are innovative – they adopt technology and understand the value of analytics.** Phil points out that, today, we have technology to do things we could not in the past. The best leaders are using technology to do things like get to the root causes of turnover and to create meaningful metrics to measure team performance. They are using technology to connect their teams to information to make their lives easier and keep them in front of residents, not in front of computers. Case in point, Marquis Companies uses electronic health record (EHR) technology to connect resident records and other key data to better manage processes and information. (They use PointClickCare, by the way, a Senior Housing Forum partner.)
6. **Great leaders get you through tough times.** “You can make lots of mistakes and still recover with great leadership,” says Phil. That’s because great leaders build strong and cohesive teams that will stick with you and even help you come out stronger.

Ultimately, great leaders build more great leaders to follow in their footsteps. And no one understands better than Phil, the impact they have on the entire community. “In the end it’s pretty straight forward,” he says. “Great leaders put the right people in the right seats on the bus.”

Which begs the question: Who’s driving your bus? Do you have a busload full of tomorrow’s great leaders? If not, maybe it’s time to have a look at who’s taking up your seats.

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